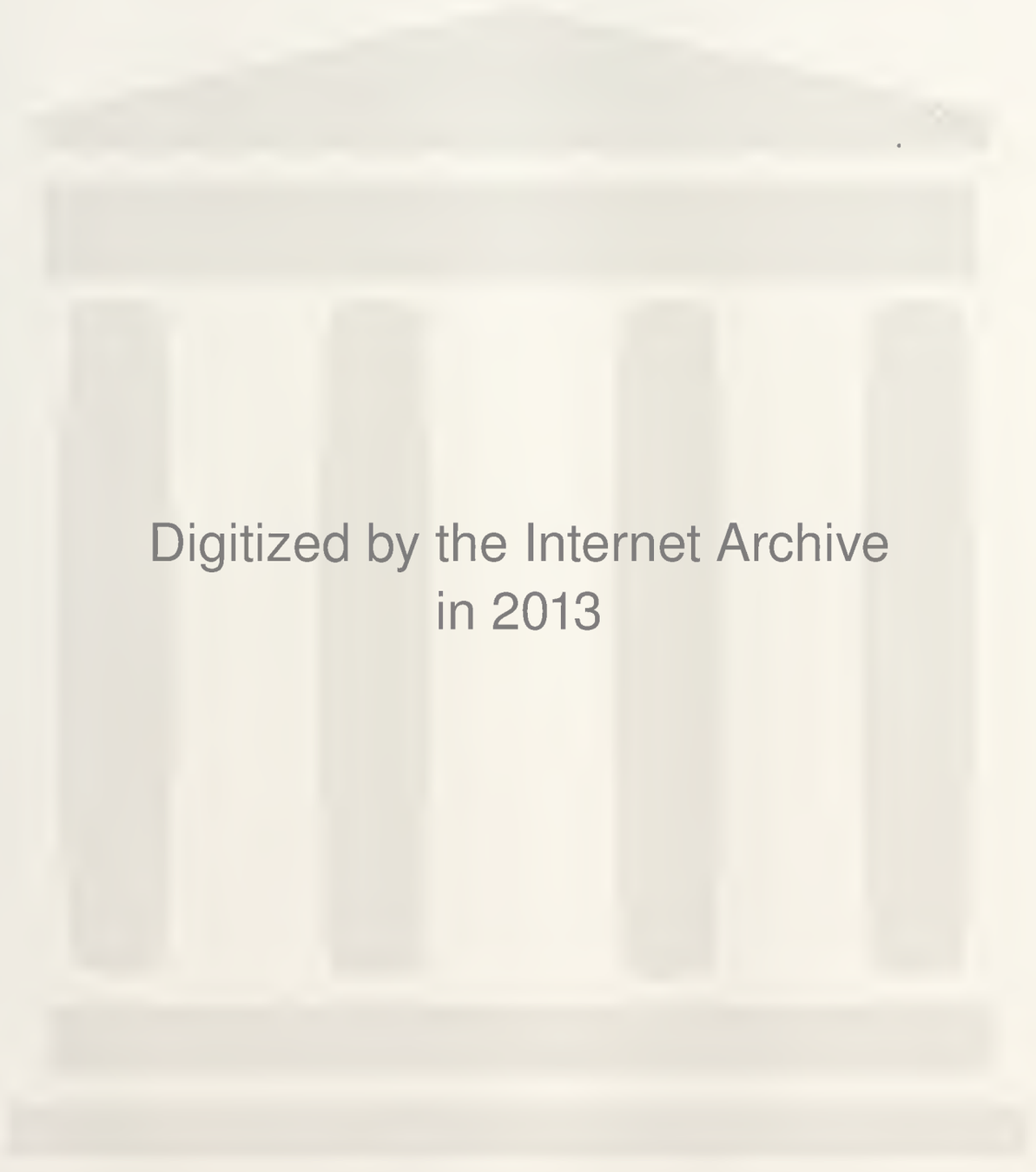

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/womeninchristian00wufu

BJC
1975
W6
1976

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

Project/Thesis

WOMEN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH: THE TAIWANESE CASE

BY

WU FU YA

B.A., Tainan Theological College, 1981
M.Div., Tainan Theological Seminary, 1984
M.Th., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1987

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
April 1, 1996

© Copyright by
Wu Fu YA
1996

Approved by

Supervisor _____

Kwok Pui Lan, Th.D.
Associate Professor of Theology

First Reader _____

Alison M. Cheek, D.Min.
Director of Feminist Liberation Theology Studies;
Member of the Faculty

Second Reader _____

Lucretia B. Yaghjian, Ph.D.
Director of the EDS/WST Write Program;
Adjunct Faculty

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I must give thanks to God who has opened another door for me to see a new paradigm for work with women in the Taiwanese Christian church. I must also give thanks to the Basel Mission in Switzerland and the committee on women's concerns and education which granted me a scholarship that helped me accomplish the Doctor of Ministry program in Massachusetts U. S. A. Without this scholarship I may not have had a chance to do further study in women's liberation theology, and this may have limited me from making a contribution to the Christian community's future.

During my study at the Episcopal Divinity School, I learned many precious lessons through theological thinking and community life which are quite different from my community in Taiwan. Life experiences at EDS enriched my thoughts about human community.

Dr. Kwok Pui Lan enlarged my vision in theology from different dimensions. Dr. Alison Cheek always offered me warm hands when I was in the misery of homesickness. Dr. Lucretia B. Yaghjian kindly and patiently corrected my English writing. I miss them and thank them for spending time reading my thesis project and giving me many good suggestions.

I am thankful for my parents' love and support and for taking care of my son while I was away from home. Thanks to my husband Tsai An Lu and my son Tsai Chyi Yow for their patience, staying alone in different places and for their encouragement during my study abroad.

There are many thanks to sisters and brothers in the Ta-Kuang Presbyterian Church, and to colleagues of the Women's Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and to all who ever offered kind support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE: TAIWANESE WOMEN AND CHRISTIANITY 9

I. Taiwanese History From Women's Perspective 11

A. Taiwan: Geographical Location and People 11

B. Taiwan Under the Dutch Colonization (1624-1662) 13

C. Taiwan Under the Rule of Koxinga (1662-1683) 14

D. Taiwan during the Rule of Ching Dynasty (1684-1894) 15

E. Taiwan Under the Japanese Colonization (1895-1945) 17

F. Taiwan and the Kuomintang Government (1945- present) 18

II. Taiwanese Women and Christian Mission 20

A. The Dutch Reformed Mission (1624-62) 20

B. The Re-emergence of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century 24

(a) General Background of the Encounter between the Taiwanese people and Christianity 24

(b) Women Missionaries and Taiwanese Women's Ministry 27

(c) Taiwanese Women's Situation and Education in the Early Period 30

(d) Women and Christian Ministry 33

III. The Third Wave of Christian Mission 36

CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES 40

I. Various Experiences of Becoming Christian 41

A. Being Raised in a Christian Family 41

B. Being Married into Christian Families 47

C. Encountering the Healing Power of Christianity 54

II. Women's Sense of Jesus 57

A. Symbol and Relationship 59

B. Jesus as a Member of the Trinitarian God 62

C. The Precious Image of Jesus for Women 64

D. Discourse on Women and Jesus 68

III. Women's Sense of God 74

A. Women's Traditional Image of God 74

B. Women's Experiences of God 78

C. Emerging Images of God 80

CHAPTER THREE: WOMEN AND CHURCH 85

I. Women's Involvement and Contribution in the Church Ministry 85

A. Women's Ministry in Its Variety 86

B. Women as the Active Lay Ministers 89

C. Women's Invisibility in the Church 92

D. Women's Critique of the Patriarchal Church 95

II. Women's Fellowship as a Sisterhood Association 99

A. Women's Fellowship as an Agency of Empowering 101

B. Women's Fellowship as an Agency of Education 104

C. The Crisis of Sisterhood 106

III. Limitations to Women's Full Participation 109

A. Obstructions from the Family 109

B. Limitations from Women Themselves 112

CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE AND CHURCH MINISTRY 116

I. Examination of Women's Self-Esteem and Self-Expectation 116

A. Common Problems of Women's Self-Esteem 117

B. Women's Self-Expectation 127

II. Women's Experience and Women's Ministry 131

A. Women's Experiences and Education 133

B. Role Model for the Next Generation 136

C. Building Better Partnership 138

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR CHURCHES TO BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN 143

APPENDIX: Questionnaire 153

BIBLIOGRAPHY 159

INTRODUCTION

The late twentieth century is a time when women's voices are becoming louder and stronger. Women are no longer passively waiting for men to define who women are, what women are supposed to be, and where women are supposed to stay. For millennia in human history, women did not have the opportunity to write their history or respond to how men have written and interpreted history from an androcentric perspective. Women have been victims under male control.[1] With the women's movement, women will not always be victims living under the control of a patriarchal society. Women are determined to tell their own stories, to correct the misinterpretation of human history, and to bring forth the healing power to those people who have suffered under societal oppression.

In the late twentieth century, there are many women's voices from around the world. Feminists, womanists, and mujeristas are speaking up, as well as women's voices from Asia, Latin America and Africa. Women are trying to define themselves according to their own social and cultural backgrounds. Women are not simply searching for general solidarity with each other; they also strive to address and to respect the differences among women themselves.

These changes are taking place generally. In this thesis project, I would like to present the experiences of Taiwanese women in the Christian church as a small contribution to Taiwanese Christian women

[1]See the description by Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecofeminism: Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination," in Ecofeminism and the Sacred, ed.,Carol J. Adams, (New York: Continuum, 1993), 35.

and to the global women's movement as well. As an ordained Presbyterian minister, I have been involved in consciousness raising with women in Taiwan. The Taiwanese Christian women's movement developed as a result of the encouragement of the World Council of Churches. It developed quite late in comparison to the secular women's movement in Taiwan. The women's movement in Taiwan can be traced back to the 1920's. But it was organized by men and survived a very short life, because of Taiwan's particular political background.[2] The real women's movement that struggled for women's equality began in 1971, initiated by Ms. Leu shiow Lian. This was the first wave of the women's movement. In 1979, Leu was imprisoned became of her involvement in the democracy movement in Taiwan. In 1982 the second wave of the movement led by Lii Yuan Jen started. Since 1987 when the martial law was abolished in Taiwan a more diverse Taiwanese women's movement began to develop.[3] Though the women's movement has existed for two decades in Taiwan, the Christian church and Christian women did not pay much attention to the secular women's movement. The reason is that the secular women's movement is centered in the area surrounding Taipei and is oriented toward elite women.

It was not until 1989 that Taiwanese Christian women organized their movement in response to the call of the World Council of Churches for churches to be in solidarity with women. The Women's Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has gradually

[2]For better understanding about Taiwanese history see chapter one.
[3]For more detail see Leu Shiow Lian, Leang shing wenn tyi neu shing guan (Women's perspective on the relationship between two sexes), (Taipei: Chyan Wey Publishing Co., 1990), 210-211.

developed a series of Christian women's educational projects and women's consciousness-raising activities. The Taiwanese Christian women's movement was organized by the General Assembly Office of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, which tried to influence the local churches.

But women's voices at the local level have not been sufficiently heard. Since the women's movement criticized the hierarchical structure in human society and in the Christian church, I consider it very important to let local women speak for themselves. What are their experiences in the church? Does the church liberate them or not, and in what ways? How do they consider themselves as Christians in Taiwanese society? How do they see women's contribution in the church? How do they think of the possibility of bringing a new ministry of the church? As Carol P. Christ has said, we have to examine "what women's religious experience would be like when . . . . articulated in women's own language."[4] This is especially true in Taiwan where we have not yet done so. For a long time, women's voices have not been heard and have not been recognized as important in the church. I think speaking with our own voice will be a good starting point for grassroots Christian women in Taiwan to contribute their thoughts and visions to women's theology. It will also be a small but meaningful contribution to the rapidly growing women's theologies of different races and cultures.

[4]Carol P. Christ, Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest, 2nd ed., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980), xxviii.

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza has said that experience is primarily an act of interpretation which takes place within the context of one's own social and cultural background.[5] So, this thesis will not only present Taiwanese women's voices but also include my own interpretation. My point of view grows out of my experience and background. Therefore I shall first address my social location in order to give readers a better understanding of my perspective.

I was born in a Taiwanese middle class family. Being the youngest and the only daughter in my family, I received care and love from my parents and three elder brothers during my childhood and adulthood. Yet, when I was married, this did not protect me from my cultural tradition which demands that women be submissive to their parents-in-law and husband. I am an ordained woman minister in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Since it is hard for women to be accepted as the only pastor in a local church, I have had to be a co-pastor with my husband in the same congregation. I am a mother of a four-year old boy. My responsibilities as a mother limit my full involvement in parish work. I came to know the disadvantage and inequality of being a woman after I was married. This unequal treatment is considered the destiny of being born a woman. I have seen my grandmothers and my mother enduring their lives with great patience. I could not identify with them, however, until after I was married. Yet, I know it is not too late for me, for the younger generation, and for other women to strive for a different future.

[5]See the summary of this development by Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 259-64.

In order to explore contemporary women's religious experiences in Taiwan, I apply the qualitative method of interview and questionnaire to present contemporary women's lived experiences. I interviewed twenty women from Ta-Kuang Presbyterian Church which is the church where I work. It is situated in the north area of Tainan city which is the oldest and the fourth largest city in Taiwan. The church is a large five story building located in the urban industrial district. The membership of the congregation is about one hundred and twenty families altogether. About two hundred and twenty members attend the worship service each Sunday morning. Congregations of the Presbyterian church are mostly middle-class. Only a few of them are in the extreme upper and lower classes. There are many different organized fellowships that reflect the different interests of gender and age such as the youth, women, elderly, married couples' etc.. "Elders and Deacons Meeting" is the main body of church administration and manages the financial distributions to each fellowship group. Congregations of the church are mostly vital and harmonious. It is a warm faith community. In addition, I have collected articles in Neu-shiuan (Women's mission magazine), published by the Women's Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in order to present a broader spectrum of voices of Christian women.

The women to whom I have talked are church members from my parish. I have selected women who represent Christian women from different family backgrounds and ages. Most of them are baptized (only one is not) and frequently attend church. Ten of these women are first

generation Christians and the other ten were born into Christian families. They are from thirty to sixty years old. All are married, and have multiple roles such as wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Some of them have their own professional work, such as running a private business, being a teacher in kindergarten and high school, or being a housewife. Only one of the women has received a bachelor's degree. Some of them are high school graduates, and some of them are illiterate.

I gave them a questionnaire (see Appendix) to read and think about before I talked to them privately. During the interview, they shared with me their viewpoints and experiences in three main areas: family life, religious practice, and their self-expectation. I took careful notes while they were speaking. If some of them had already written their responses on the questionnaire, I would first read those responses carefully and then talk with them again to gain a more detailed understanding and clarification of their thoughts and responses to those questions. I look at these responses against the background and in the context of the history of Christianity in Taiwan.

This thesis will include four chapters. In the first chapter, I would like to discuss the history of Christianity in Taiwan. I am interested in what impact Christianity brought into this land and how it influenced people's lives in different periods of time. I will especially focus on the relationship between Taiwanese women and Christianity and explore whether or not Christianity has oppressed or liberated women and in what ways. There are limited historical

records about women and most of the materials are either written by male missionaries or by male Christians. So this chapter will only present a short historical background in order to give readers a general understanding of Taiwanese women and Christianity.

Chapters two to four are primarily based on interviews with Taiwanese Christian women. In chapter two, I would like to present women's spiritual experiences and analyze how these women have become Christians. Who or what influenced them the most? Do they experience Christian faith as empowering or not? For those women who came originally from non-Christian families, what conflict or struggle have they gone through in order to become Christians? How did they deal with those conflicts? Then I discuss women's understandings of God and Jesus since most interviewees have been members of the church for a long time.

Chapter three describes what women think of their involvement in and contributions to the church. How do they see women's role and position in the church? What are the reasons that prevent them from fully participating in the church? In the last chapter, I would like to examine Taiwanese Christian women's self-esteem and how to improve and develop women's self-esteem in a more positive way. I hope the Christian women's movement will not only awaken women to see their own strength and potential to be full human beings (not simply defined by traditional culture and male perspective), but also influence men as well.

Finally, my readers should be aware that this research study is drawn from a small sample and does not represent all Taiwanese Christian women. The women interviewed are members of one local parish of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. I use the data collected from these interviews to share with readers those women's ideas about themselves and the church. Throughout this thesis, I have changed the names of the women I interviewed. In this thesis project I have used mandarin romanization for women's names and Chinese characters. This research will also unavoidably include my personal interpretation of these Christian women's thoughts and their vision for the Christian women's movement in Taiwan. I do hope that these women's voices will form a small chorus bringing out powerful messages from the journey they have gone through so that their voices will find echoes in the lives of other women.

CHAPTER ONE

TAIWANESE WOMEN AND CHRISTIANITY

Taiwanese history is like a sad story of an abandoned woman who was violated and exploited without any compassion and mercy. What violators wanted from her was profit and her pain and suffering was neglected. There is a Taiwanese folk song called "U-ia-Hoe"[1] (Flower in a raining evening). It describes how the flower (a woman) was destroyed in a heavy raining evening. Nobody cares about her; no one can show her a bright future. She is like one of the raindrops that falls into the suffering pond without return. The song is so sad and reflects women's lives and Taiwanese history as well.

Histories are written as a kind of interpretation of the past. Even when historians try to record the so called "objective" historical facts, it is unavoidable that they include their own thoughts and their personal assumptions.[2] The background and the standpoint of historians influence how they select and interpret the historical events with which they are concerned. Taiwanese history has always been written by historians appointed by the government who presented what the rulers would want the people to know, instead of the truth that people really want to know.

Interpreting history from the native Taiwanese perspective is quite a new experience for the people. In 1987 when the martial law

[1]The author of the song is Mr. Deng Yeu Shyan. The year in which this song was composed is unknown. It might have been composed during the period of Japanese colonization.

[2]Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her (New York: Crossroad, 1983), xvii.

was abolished, Taiwanese people began to have more freedom and space to claim themselves as the subject of Taiwanese history. Since most historical accounts were written by men, and women have traditionally been marginalized in Taiwanese society, it is really hard to find much data related to women and to know clearly what Taiwanese women have gone through in the historical process. How did women suffer in a patriarchal society? What were women's contributions? And what did women expect in their lives? Here, I will try to present Taiwanese women as the subject of Taiwanese history by discussing women's lives in different periods of time. I am not doing historical archaeology to dig out new historical data for I am not a professional historian. What I am trying to do is to re-read those existing historical materials, focus on data related to women, and re-organize these materials to present a general picture of Taiwanese women's lives. As the title of this chapter indicates, I will focus my attention on the dynamics between Taiwanese women and Christianity in Taiwanese history. I hope this kind of reconstruction of women's history and feminist analysis will "enable women continuously to understand what is going on and provide resources for strategizing new options."[3] Here, what I refer to as feminist analysis and the reconstruction of women's history is a methodology borrowed from Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza who says;

> A reconstruction of women's history not based on the mere fact of biological sex as a timeless heuristic category, but on gender

[3]Katie G. Cannon et al., God's Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1985), 175.

understood in social terms with reference to patriarchal relationships of inequality within the private and the public spheres, is also theoretically able to account for the variations of social status, class difference, and cultural identity.[4]

I also acknowledge the limitation of my own reading of history, which should not be taken as representative of all Taiwanese women.

I. Taiwanese History from Women's Perspective

A. Taiwan: Geographical Location and People

Before discussing Taiwanese history it is good to have some understanding of Taiwan's geographical location. The shape of Taiwan looks like a sweet potato: it is wide in the middle area and narrow at both ends. Taiwan is composed of seventy-nine islands (of different sizes). The area of the main island is about thirty-six thousand square miles, comprising about ninety-nine percent of the total area of Taiwan. Whenever people talk about Taiwan, they mostly refer to the main island. The western neighbor is China and there is a Taiwan Strait in between them. The eastern side is the Pacific Ocean, while the southern part is the Bashi Channel separating Taiwan from the Philippines. The northern border is close to Ryukyus, Japan.[5]

Although it is hard to trace the pre-history of Taiwan, the island has exited for millennia. Taiwan is a nation consisting of multiple races and ethnic groups. The history of Taiwan is a story of

[4]Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 86-7.
[5]Shyy Ming, Tair-uan-ren syh bae nian shyy (Taiwanese history of four hundred years) (San Jose, CA: Paradise Culture Associates, 1980), 6.

immigrants. Although people have arrived in different periods, they often had the same reason, namely of escaping from disasters in their homeland and trying to find a new paradise for survival.[6]

The first inhabitants of Taiwan probably belonged to the same ethnic group as the Malays and Indonesians. They are called the aborigines in Taiwan. No historical data could be found to indicate when they arrived in Taiwan. According to some archaeological findings the aborigines already lived in Taiwan around 3000 B.C.E.[7] The aborigines have nine tribes who still speak their own languages.[8] Others are called "Pyng puu tzwu"[9] who have been assimilated into the Hann-Taiwanese[10] who arrived later and have lost their indigenous culture. The aborigines lived in primitive Taiwan quietly and peacefully without contact with the outside world. Although there were Hann people who came to the main island, they did not mix with the aborigines. During the seventeenth century when the East India Company of the Dutch invaded and occupied Taiwan, the suffering of Taiwanese (Aboriginal-Taiwanese and Hann-Taiwanese) began.

[6]Hwang Bor Her, Ben shiang chu tour tian de tzyy min (The people struggle for liberation) (Taipei, Taiwan: Dawshiang Publishing Co., 1991), 106.
[7]Ibid., 14.
[8]Ibid., 17.
[9]Ibid. Originally the "Pyng puu tzwu" had about ten tribes. They lived on the plain or near the sea shore in Taiwan. Their skin color was lighter than the aborigines.
[10]Hann-Taiwanese originally immigrated from China. They speak Amoy or Hakka.

B. Taiwan under the Dutch Colonization (1624-1662)

Hann people arrived in Taiwan around the twelfth century. Most of them were criminals or pirates who came for a temporary stay. In 1624 the Dutch came to Taiwan and began to bring large group of laborers from China in order to cultivate the land and to plant sugar cane.[11] During that period of time southern China (especially Fwujiann and Goangdong provinces) suffered from great natural disasters. Many farmers could not survive by farming and had to sell themselves into slavery.[12] Under these circumstances, the women from these laborers' families suffered from family separation, and had to support families. It is not difficult to imagine the harsh life of those women under that chaotic and disastrous situation.

Under the Dutch plantation policy there were more and more Hann laborers coming to Taiwan, threatening the survival of the aborigines. Tensions between these two groups became sensitive. For the Dutch it was advantageous to maintain this conflictual condition between the two groups so that they would keep an eye on one another. The Dutch sometimes used this tension to gain better control of them.[13] Both the aborigines and Hann laborers suffered under the heavy tax and exploitation by the Dutch. The aboriginal women also suffered from the exploitation from Hann laborers.[14] These two groups of people

[11]See Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan Shyy (A short history of Taiwan) (Gaushyong, Taiwan: The First Publishing Co., 1987), 5-11.
[12]Shyy Ming, Tair uan ren shy bae nian shyy (Taiwanese history of four fundred years), 90-1.
[13]Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan shyy, 19.
[14]Ibid., 18.

treated each other as enemies, without recognizing the control of the Dutch.

The Spanish also came to Taiwan in 1626 and controlled northern Taiwan. In 1642 they were defeated by the Dutch. The Spanish did not leave behind much influence and Taiwan was under Dutch control for thirty-eight years (1624-1662). Then came Koxinga, the leader of an anti-Manchu movement after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, who ousted the Dutch from Taiwan.

C. Taiwan under the Rule of Koxinga (1662-1683)

Taiwan was under Koxinga and his son's control for twenty-one years (1662-1683). During this period of time the Manchu in China enforced severe rules making people who lived near the sea move inland in order to keep them from the invasions of the Japanese and sea robbers. Those who dared disobey were killed. Many people fled to Taiwan to avoid the tyrannical rule of the Manchus.

There were only a few Hann women in Taiwan at that time. During this wave of immigration the pirates began to capture women for sale to gain big profits. It was reported that a woman could be sold for hundreds tale of gold.[15] In a peaceful society women suffered under patriarchal rules and traditional bondages. In upheaval and war time women suffered even more because of the violence and sexual exploitation of men. Yet, their pain was seldom recognized by the society.

[15]Ibid., 31.

D. Taiwan during the Rule of Ching Dynasty (1684-1894)

Taiwan was drawn into the territory of China for the first time in 1684, after the Manchu destroyed the power of Koxinga's family. Yet, the Manchu government did not think Taiwan was important, because Taiwan was a small rural island. The Manchus did not encourage immigrants to come to Taiwan. In fact, there was a "Three-Forbidden" policy: 1) Those who would go to Taiwan had to obtain an official license, otherwise they would receive severe punishment. 2) Those emigrating to Taiwan were not allowed to bring their families. 3) The people from Goangdong were not allowed to go to Taiwan, for they were seen as potential pirates.[16] Taiwanese (both aborigines and Hann) under Manchu's severe control had to pay very heavy taxes. Still, a large group of Hann people risked coming to Taiwan. They were seeking a better place to survive. There are records showing that each year there were many stowaways. For example, during the year of 1758 there were nine hundred and ninety men and women, young and old, trying to come to Taiwan secretly; yet they were found out and thirty-four men and women died during the process.[17] During the rule of the Manchus, there was a popular proverb saying "Every three years comes a small rebellion and every five years comes a big rebellion".[18] Taiwanese were not satisfied with Manchu's disabled administration and heavy taxes. The Manchu government also did not try hard enough to improve the condition of Taiwan.

[16]Wang Yuh Der, Kuu menn de tair uan (The distressed Taiwan), Books of the Free Age, No.9 (Taipei, Taiwan: Jeng Nan Rong, 1979), 68-9.
[17]Ibid., 71.
[18]Ibid., 82.

It was said that Taiwanese women enjoyed more freedom in the public sphere than women in China at the early stage of Ching Dynasty. Taiwanese women usually went out to the market place or to visit temples in small groups during festival celebrations.[19] This was due to Taiwan's being an immigrant society which has developed its own sub-culture. And given that Taiwan was far enough from China, severe control by the government was less effective. Similarly traditional cultural restrictions were also less effective. When, however, the immigrant society became settled and well developed, women's lives changed. Taiwanese women could no longer freely enjoy activities in the public sphere. The society put them under the control of traditional Confucianism and practiced foot-binding. According to a research record done by Japanese in the year of 1905, 56.9% of Taiwanese women had their feet bound.[20] The custom of "Jye Fuh" (woman adhering to widowhood or woman who died protecting her chastity) also became popular.[21]

Taiwanese women lived under the control of the Confucian patriarchal social system. They had to go through "marriage" and gain their identity by being someone's wife and mother, as well as assure ancestral worship after they died.[22] Under this patriarchal marriage

[19]Jwo Jih Wen, Ching day tair uan fuh neu de sheng hwo (Taiwanese women's life during the Ching Dynasty), (Taipei, Taiwan: Tzyh Lih Woan Baw Publishing Co., 1993), 138.
[20]Ibid., 70-1.
[21]Ibid., 139-43.
[22]In Taiwanese folk religious culture the importance of receiving worship by decendants for the death spirit means that they may have eternal life after death. Those death spirits who do not receive worship would become wandering and hunger ghosts which is a horrible situation to endure.

system, women's lives were confined to the family household. Women were in subordinate positions throughout their lives.

E. Taiwan under the Japanese Colonization (1895-1945)

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the Ching government ceded Taiwan and Pescadores to Japan. Another chapter of painful colonial history began. Even though Japan had brought forth the modernization of Taiwan, its Japanization movement (which forbade Taiwanese to speak in their own mother tongue and forced Taiwanese to use Japanese names only) and its imperialistic control stirred up the Taiwanese anti-Japanese movement.[23]

During the first twenty years of Japanese colonization, there was not much change in Taiwanese women's lives. To increase capital production, it is necessary to liberate women and so gain more human resources and economic profits. Women's education, promoted by western missionaries at this period of time, helped in liberating women with unbound feet and involved them in producing forces. Although Taiwanese women living under Japanese rule had more access to education and could work outside the home, they still suffered under triple oppressions. These are colonialization, patriarchy, and capitalism. There was a popular saying in Taiwan during Japanese rule and the early years of the Kuomintang Government, which says," There are three happinesses of a man's life: enjoy Chinese food, marry Japanese woman, and live in a house of western style construction."

[23]Wang Yuh Der, Kuu menn de tair uan, 147.

From this saying, it is not difficult to imagine how women had to endure their lives in a male-centered patriarchal society.

F. Taiwan and the Kuomintang Government (1945-present)

In 1945 the second World War came to an end. As a consequence of the Pacific War, the army of the Republic of China (the Kuomintang government) led by Chiang Kai-Shek came to control Taiwan. The Taiwanese educational system and standard of living became much better than China's after the fifty year rule of Japan. When Taiwanese first encountered soldiers from China, they were greatly disappointed because these soldiers lacked discipline and robbed the property of civilians.[24] A severe confrontation between the Taiwanese and the Kuomintang government broke out on February 28, 1947, just two years after the Kuomintang government's reign. The February 28 incident took place in Taipei. Soldiers from mainland China who considered the sale of wine and cigarettes a government monopoly, beat a woman who was selling cigarettes privately. A man who came to stop the beating was killed by the soldiers. Many Taiwanese demanded that the government imprison the killer and stop such incidents. Many of these demonstrators were shot and killed without any reason. The Taiwanese were agitated and began to attack mainlanders. During that incident the Kuomintang soldiers ruthlessly kidnapped, tortured and killed many educated Taiwanese men with no reason. It was estimated that about twenty thousand Taiwanese men were killed.

[24]Ibid., 155-7.

Taiwanese women suffered a lot under this kind of horrible political situation. Women of the victimized families suffered extremely from political intimidation and continuous surveillance. Some of them went crazy, some committed suicide. But most of them tried very hard to raise their children. The Kuomintang government exerted terrible military control over the Taiwanese,[25] and from 1948 martial law continued for thirty-nine years. The Taiwanese learned from these historical lessons and began to develop a clearer and stronger Taiwanese identity. They made up their minds never again to be under the control of any alien power.

Women fought against exploitation. Women also tried hard to survive and to stand up again and again in the harsh situations. Since martial law was lifted in Taiwan, women from the victim families of the February 28 incident began to tell the truth and demand the government apologize publicly. Taiwanese women are not constrained to keep quiet and passive any more. Women's movements are developing in many parts of the world. "History" must be accompanied by "Herstory" to present a real and a full picture of human story. Taiwanese women must keep strong faith and courage even in the dark night. Then the bright future will not be too far away.

[25]Ibid., 157-60.

II. Taiwanese Women and Christian Mission

The history of Christianity in Taiwan reflects its tragic political history. There were three missionary waves in Taiwan. However, all three waves arrived at times when Taiwan was caught up in the international turmoil in East Asia. I will focus only on the dynamics between Taiwanese women and Christian mission during the mid-seventeenth century and in the nineteenth century. Although the Spanish Catholic Missionary movement had also come to the north-eastern part of Taiwan, I will focus my attention on the Reformed Christian missionary movement only, for I came from that tradition.

A. The Dutch Reformed Mission (1624-62)

Before the Dutch came there was no organized government or recognized ruling body in Taiwan. The aborigines lived separately and independently within their own tribes. Among the aborigines, the Ami tribe is a matrilineal society. Some tribes practice a "bi-system"[26] while others follow the patriarchal system.

In 1627, three years after the Dutch occupation, the Dutch East India Company sent missionaries to Taiwan. It was the earliest Protestant mission ever to arrive in East Asia. The roles of the missionaries included that of chaplains, interpreters, evangelists, and traders. Any decisions about their missionary work had to be

[26]The bi-system can be both matrilineal and patriarchal. The first born baby of the family (whether a girl or a boy) can have the right of inheritance and can become the head of the family, particularly in the Paiwan tribe. See Gau Yuan Yuan, Tair uan gau shan tzwu (Mountain tribes in Taiwan) (Taipei, Taiwan: Shiang Tsao Publishing Co., 1977), 44.

first agreed upon by the Formosa Council of the company. The company had the right to decide when and where they would work and live.[27] The evangelical work of the Dutch missionaries mainly took place among the aborigines and in accord with the Formosa Council's range of expansion .[28] The character of their mission was mass conversion of the whole tribe or village.[29] For example in 1636 about 5900 Pyng-puu-tzwu were baptized into Christianity.[30] The Dutch were successful in converting people. The missionaries believed Taiwan had been granted to them by God and planned a long period of church expansion. Because of their belief in the close relationship between the church and state, they saw no inconsistency in serving God and the imperialistic expansion overseas at the same time.[31] Records indicate that the Dutch missionaries were instructed to "convince, rebuke, exhort and at the same time to punish, intimidate, and pacify."[32]

During the Dutch rule, the aborigines were made to work hard in hunting deer skins for trade. Each aborigine was required to send one deer skin per year as tax.[33] On the other hand, the Dutch missionaries tried to evangelize them. They opened church schools for

[27]Shyu Chian Shinn, Her lan shyr day tair uan ji du jiaw shyy (A history of the early Dutch mission in Formosa), vol. 1 (Taiwan: Presbyterian Church of Formosa Centenary Publications Committee, 1965), 26-7.
[28]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy (A centenary history of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa 1865-1965), 2nd ed., (Taiwan: The Presbyterian Church of Formosa, 1984), 2.
[29]Ibid., 4.
[30]Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan shyy, 19.
[31]Shy Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 4.
[32]Shyu Chian Shinn, Her lan shyr day tair uan ji du jiaw shyy, 44.
[33]Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan shyy, 17.

educating aboriginal boys and girls to read the romanized Dutch language and the Bible. When the first church school was set up in 1636 by Rev. Robertus Junius at Shingaang (near the present Tainan city), there were about seventy boys and sixty girls from age ten to thirteen studying in romanized Dutch, learning prayers and taking some other courses.[34] The Dutch missionaries not only tried to educate the younger generation but also started adult Christian education. In 1639 they began an adult school and a women's school. The class met twice every week to learn the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, hymns, and Catechism in romanized Latin or Dutch.[35]

School education was quite a new thing for the aborigines. The provision of equal education for girls and women was really unusual. From a feminist point of view, however, the Christian education of the Dutch missionaries was only a tool for teaching the aborigines submission and obedience rather than a means of liberating them to develop their own thoughts and ideas. Christian education for girls and women was not helping them improve their social status and power. On the contrary, the patriarchal nature of Western Christianity destroyed the aboriginal women's privileges. Women in matrilineal tribes had high social and religious status compared to other women. In 1637 when Dutch missionaries came to aboriginal villages to convert the masses to Christianity, the representatives of four villages were forced to set fire to their gods and goddesses. The aboriginal women priests, once holding a respected position within their society, were

[34]Shyu Chian Shinn, Her lan shyr day tair uan ji du jiaw shyy, 50.
[35]Ibid., 52.

forced to choose conversion or death when confronted with the Dutch Christian missionaries. In 1658, the Dutch expelled 298 aboriginal women priests from their tribes; 250 of them were starved to death in the wilderness and 48 of them eventually were baptized and returned home.[36] Hence the independence of aboriginal women was gradually weakened during the encounter with patriarchal Christianity,[37] and further shakened by the increase of Hann immigrants who imported their Confucian patriarchal ideology which influenced their tribal society.

After thirty-eight years of Dutch rule, Koxinga of the Ming Dynasty chased away the Dutch and settled in Taiwan. He considered aboriginal Christians friends of the Dutch and thus, killed many of them in order to prevent collaboration between the Dutch and the aborigines. After that, in order to avoid massacre, many aboriginal Christians fled to the high mountains. The Dutch mission work left a legacy that resulted in some aborigines' ability to write in romanized Dutch and to make business contracts with Hann-Taiwanese.[38] Christianity practically came to a halt in Taiwan until two hundred years later when it was re-introduced by British missionaries in the nineteenth century.

[36]Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan shyy, 20.
[37]Ibid., 18. Also see George Vicedom, Faith that Moves Mountains: A Study of the Tribal Church in Taiwan (Taipei, Taiwan: The China Post, 1967), 4.
[38]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 2.

B. The Re-emergence of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century

(a) General Background of the Encounter between the Taiwanese People and Christianity

The British had by now emerged as the dominant power in Asia after two hundred years of imperialistic aggression and capitalistic expansion. Christian mission in China made some progress after China was forced to sign unequal treaties as a result of the Sino-British Opium War (1842). Missionaries were allowed to preach the Gospel in five ports in China and to buy property. The English Presbyterian Mission sent its first missionary to China in 1847. In sending Dr. James Laidlaw Maxwell, the English Presbyterian Mission extended its missionary field to South Taiwan in 1865. The Canadian Presbyterian Mission also sent their first missionary, Rev. George Leslie Mackay, to North Taiwan in 1871. This wave of mission work first started among the Hann-Taiwanese, for they were the majority at that time. Though the missionaries tried to evangelize the aborigines as well, it was harder to reach them, for they lived separately in the high mountains. Later, when the Japanese ruled over Taiwan, the aborigines were treated harshly. It was after the second World War that mission work to the aborigines developed further.

Following the Opium War, the Ching government was defeated in a series of imperialistic wars. An anti-foreign atmosphere developed in mainland China as well as in Taiwan, even though the British and Canadian mission came to Taiwan without military escort. Anti-foreign fever spread quickly because of the missionaries' condemnation of

ancestor worship. This touched the nerve of the Hann-Taiwanese [39], and the people responded with fierce resentment. The Taiwanese reacted strongly against foreign missionaries, partly because they considered Christianity as brought in by Western powers resulting from unequal treaties and economic exploitation.[40] There were even rumors that the "Red-haired barbarians" had dug out the hearts and eyes of the dead and made drugs from them.[41]

At the beginning of the mission work , there were many conflicts between the missionaries and the Hann-Taiwanese. The missionaries introduced one transcendental invisible God, the Creator. This was entirely different from the traditional images of gods and goddesses who were more pluralistic and physical. Although the Hann-Taiwanese have the concept of "Tian" (Heaven), its meaning was largely moral and political. The Hann-Taiwanese would not understand and accept a notion of God in a highly abstract and metaphysical sense.

Besides, the concepts of "sin" and the "virgin birth of Jesus" were considered ridiculous. Many Hann-Taiwanese see certain forms of salvation and eternal life in the continuation of generations. To them the Christian concept of salvation, as explained to them by the missionaries, seemed vague and individualistic.[42] There was a saying that "worshipping gods is of no use if one is unfilial". The Hann-Taiwanese who accepted Jesus as their Savior had to struggle to

[39]Ibid., 16-7.
[40]Ibid., 8-9.
[41]Yang Bih Chuan, Jean ming tair uan shyy, 172.
[42]See Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 74.

overcome not only the necessary break from their traditional identity with their ancestors, but also the strong resistance of their families.[43] However, there was always the problem of relating to people of other faiths. Many Taiwan Christians wanted to eliminate everything related to their old way of life in order to maintain their identity as Christians. This was due to the fact that the kind of Christianity brought in by the Western missionaries was deeply immersed in Western culture.

Evangelistic mission was hard to develop under this conflictual situation. Yet, because of the hard work of missionaries, including family visits and the introduction of modern Western medicine, people were attracted gradually. For example, Dr. James Laidlaw Maxwell had very good knowledge of modern Western medicine. He treated patients without charge, more than fifty patients came to see him each day. Yet, not many of the patients were converted.[44] Most of the earliest Christians of Hann-Taiwanese came from lower class families or backgrounds and were uneducated. Their marginalized social background and loose family ties made them turn to Christianity for new opportunities and support.[45] But, they still had to endure discrimination from their family, relatives, and neighbors.

Christian mission also attracted the Taiwanese through its educational work. For centuries, the Taiwanese were under colonial

[43]Ibid., 16-7.
[44]Lay Yeong Shyang, Jiaw huey shyy huah (Topics on Taiwan church history), series II (Tainan, Taiwan: Renguang Publishing Co., 1990), 7
[45]Syyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy , 13-4.

rule by different alien powers. To enjoy a peaceful life and to receive a good education seemed to be an impossible dream for the majority, except for those who belonged to the few feudal and rich families. During the Japanese colonization, Japan had tried to raise the educational level of the people, and in 1944 the schooling rate of children was 71%. But its educational system was very imperialistic, intending to make the Taiwanese Japanized in terms of language and customs.[46] When the missionaries provided free education, teaching romanized Taiwanese, many people were attracted. There was a saying: "The good thing for attending the church is that the church helps people to read". But many people did not understand that helping people read the romanized Gospel stories was one of the ways to convert people to Christianity.[47] The missionaries worked hard to provide education for boys and girls, and for adults, as well as for the disabled, dumb and blind people. Here, I will focus on women's ministry and education started by missionaries and the participation of Taiwanese women.

(b) Women Missionaries and Taiwanese Women's Ministry

In the early stage of Christian mission, the British Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church sent only male missionaries who were medical doctors or ministers. Later the wives of missionaries were sent to begin mission work with women. Rev. Hugh Richie, the first British minister sent by the British Mission Board of the Presbyterian

[46]Wang Yuh Der, Kuu menn de tair uan, 114.
[47]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 75.

Church to South Taiwan in 1867, came with his wife. Mrs. Richie always accompanied her husband when he visited families and preached in many different areas in southern Taiwan.[48] In northern Taiwan Mrs. George Leslie Mackay and Mrs. David Landsborough began women's ministry in 1879.[49] It was unfortunate that most historical records noted these women as Mrs. so and so, and so it is hard to know their real names and their family names. They have contributed greatly to women's ministry.

Mrs. Richie was especially concerned about the low social position and illiteracy of Taiwanese women. She worked hard with her husband Rev. Richie in planning to set up a women's or girls' school. Yet they faced strong resistance from their colleagues who thought that it was not proper to set up a girls' school before the boys' school was established.[50] The patriarchal attitude of male missionaries was obvious. Rev. Richie died in 1871, but Mrs. Richie continued to work hard and made great contributions to women's ministry. When she asked the Women's Missionary Society to send a woman missionary, the society decided to appoint her as the first female missionary in 1880 to continue women's ministry in Taiwan. Later in the same year, the

[48]Hwang Maw Ching and others eds., Tair uan ju du jang lao jiaw huey tai pyng jing maayea geh jih niann jiaw huey yih bae ell shyr nian shyy (A 120 year history of the James Laidlaw Maxwell memorial church of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan) (Tainan, Taiwan: Maxwell Memorial Church, 1985), 117.

[49]Hwang Wuu Dong and Shyu Chian Shinn, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey lih shyy (History records of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan), vol.1, Ching Dynasty (Taiwan: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 1959), 41.

[50]Hwang Maw Ching, ed., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey tai pyng jing maa yea geh jih niann jiaw huey jeou shyr nian shyy (A ninety year history of the James Laidlaw Maxwell memorial church of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan) (Tainan, Taiwan: Mexwell Memorial Church, 1988), 120.

Women's Missionary Society sent another single woman to come and help.[51] It is interesting to know that while these women missionaries worked hard in organizing women's groups and teaching them prayer, and the Bible, many male missionaries were annoyed by their work. Some male missionaries even asked the Missionary Council to discuss whether it was proper or not to allow women to lead prayers in public! The Missionary Council was disturbed by Mrs. Richie and other women missionaries because they asked to have equal rights with the male missionaries and to share partnership in ministry. It was only after many years of discussion that the two sexes could develop more cooperative relations.[52] Lives of women missionaries in Taiwan were very similar to the situation Kwok Pui Lan has observed in her book, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927,

> "【Women missionaries】once in China, they experienced a sense of freedom and liberation denied to them in their own society. . . . they found the mission field offered them unexpected authority and opportunities for achievement, adventure, and status".[53]

When women missionaries first arrived in Taiwan, they sympathized with Hann women who suffered under the traditional bondages. They considered themselves more liberated and were eager to help Taiwanese women to get out of the discriminatory conditions. Yet, their ministry conflicted with those of their male colleagues. This

[51]Hwang Wuu Dong and Shyu Chian Shinn, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey lih shyy, vol. 1, 44.
[52]Hwang Maw Ching, ed., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey tai pyng jing maa yea geh jih nian jiaw huey jeou shyr nian shyy, 121-2.
[53]Kwok Pui Lan, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), 20.

experience helped them to examine the reality of sexual discrimination of their own culture more concretely and clearly. While they encouraged the Taiwanese women's struggle, they also became more conscious of their own oppression. They were motivated to argue with the male missionaries and to fight for equal partnership in church ministry. This was something new to them. The freedom and authority living in a mission field conferred was hard to gain in their own patriarchal society.

(c) Taiwanese Women's Situation and Education in the Early Period

Women who lived under the patriarchal Hann-Taiwanese society were considered inferior to men. They were treated as useless and were called "peir chyan huoh," meaning that you lose money to raise them up. Women could not work outside the house to earn money and were not seen as productive laborers for the family. In addition, the family was obliged to provide a dowry in order to marry off the daughter. As a result, giving birth to a daughter was never a happy event but a heavy burden. If a female baby had any natural physical deformity such as a harelip or limp, sometimes she would be killed immediately after birth.[54] Before the early 1900's middle and upper class families bound the feet of their young daughters to show people that they were from good families. In this way, the daughters could be married into some other rich families. Girls were not allowed to study together with boys in school. Most parents thought it was not necessary for girls to receive education. Only those girls who grew up in a very rich

[54]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 90-1.

family would have the chance to study at home with private teachers. Women were not allowed to talk with men who were not family members. Once a woman got married, she had to give birth to a boy child for her husband's family. If not, she would be treated very badly, and her husband had the right to take a concubine.[55]

As the historical data shows, most Hann-Taiwanese who became Christians were from poor and lower class families. They did not know how to read and write. It was especially hard to find women who could read, since only one tenth of the male Christians at that time were able to read.[56] The missionaries considered teaching Christians how to read and write extremely important in order for them to have a better understanding of their Christian belief. So they began to set up schools training men and women with the expectation that they would assist in local ministry and evangelism.

As I have mentioned previously, that Rev. and Mrs. Richie tried hard to set up a girls' school. But even when Mrs. Richie volunteered to provide the money (about 300 pounds) for construction, they faced resistance in the community. It was not until 1887 that the first girls' school, Shin-Lou Girls' School (later renamed " Presbyterian Girls' School" in 1923) was set up. It was the first girls' school to be established in Southern Taiwan. In 1895, another women's school was established to meet the needs of mature students who were too old to receive education in a girls' school. Later in 1926 it developed

[55]Ibid.
[56]Ibid., 22,72.

into the Women's Theological School.[57] The first women's school in North Taiwan was established in 1884. Most of the women students were church members. They were recommended by their local pastors and were from many different areas. Women from the aboriginal tribes were among the students. Since there were no day care centers at that time many of them would bring their children along. There were also older women who brought along their daughters-in-law to study with them.[58] The only requirement for education was that women and girls unbind their feet. They studied many different subjects, such as Classical Chinese, reading and writing, Mathematics, Geography, Family Health, and so forth. Those women who studied in theological school would learn Catechism, preaching, hymns, teaching method to equip them as assistants to the ministers.[59] The women's school in North Taiwan closed in 1901 due to the death of Dr. Mackay. In 1907, with the help of Canadian women missionaries, the school reopened and developed into a junior and a high school. In 1910 another women's school was established for adults and married women only. After taking the two year course, the graduates could be ministers in the local churches.[60] Led by Ms. Isabel J. Elliot, the first nursing school for women was set up in 1912, heralding another new beginning for women.[61]

[57]Lay Gau An Syh, ed., Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy (The short history of women's mission board) (Taipei, Taiwan: Women's Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 1965), 15.
[58]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 91.
[59]Ibid.
[60]Ibid., 149.
[61]Lay Yeong Shyan, Jiaw huey shyy huah (Topics on Taiwan church history), Series I, (Tainan, Taiwan: Renguang Publishing Co., 1990), 37.

Women's education provided by the missionaries opened a new way for Taiwanese women. These educated Taiwanese women could not only read and write but also could find jobs outside their families. Because of their professional training, they could work, earn small amounts of income and live more independently than ever before.

Yet, women's education at this early stage was still primarily a means for Christian conversion. It liberated Taiwanese women in some ways, but it could not help them to struggle against cultural discrimination against women. The early graduates were expected to be good wives of Christian men and ministers. They were to be obedient and submissive assistants of the ministers, and good Christian women bearing witness for Christ in Taiwanese society.[62]

(d) Women and Christian Ministry

Women have enthusiastically participated in mission work in Taiwan since its very beginning, even though their work was seldom recognized and can hardly be found in historical records. The contributions of wives of missionaries who came to the mission field with their husbands and of single women missionaries should not be neglected. Mrs. Richie and many other hard working women should have a place in our historical memory.

Though women's participation and involvement were not considered important enough to be part of the history from an androcentric point of view, Taiwanese women have been involved in mission from the very beginning. A few Taiwanese women showed compassion to foreign

[62]Lay Gau An Syh, ed., Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy, 14.

missionaries when they were attacked by Taiwanese men. There was a story about the first president of Taiwan Theological School, Dr. Thomas Barclay, who was smeared with excrement and beaten severely when he preached in a rural chapel in 1885. Women from the villages (some of them were not Christians) helped him to find a place to stay and clean himself and prepared lunch for him.[63] Dannshoei Presbyterian Church was the first church set up in North Taiwan by Rev. George Leslie Mackay in 1873. At the opening ceremony Dr. Mackay said to the public: " Mrs. Chern Taa is our first mother of Israel." Because of her hard work in evangelism the church could be established. Mrs. Chern was also the first lay minister of that church.[64]

Mrs. Jang-Chian (1830-1915), the widow of a Taiwanese minister, worked hard as a lay minister at Yan Puu Church for twenty-five years. Before she went there to help, the church nearly closed for there were hardly any people. After she went there as a minister, more than ten members joined gradually after the church re-organized.[65] There was another great aboriginal woman, Jy-Yuann (from the Atayal tribe), who was the first baptized Christian. She graduated from the Women's School in the North in 1930 and became the first woman minister of the aborigines. She worked hard and preached in many mountain areas with great success. She was named the " Mother of the mountain churches."[66]

[63]Jan Jeng Yih, Ba Keh Lii bor shyh yen tair uan (Dr. Thomas Barclay and Taiwan) (Taipei, Taiwan: Evergreen Books, 1976), 52-4.
[64]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 46-7.
[65]Lay Yeong Shyang, Tair uan jiaw huey shyy huah, series II, 167-8.
[66]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 373.

Many other women joined the ministry after the 1900's since there were more women studying in the Women's School. The number further increased after the Women's Mission Division was set up in North Taiwan in 1922 and in South Taiwan in 1929.[67] A group of Christian women discovered that villagers were very eager to hear the Gospel when they visited a Hakka village. Then they decided to get involved in the church's frontier ministry and established the Women's Mission Division.[68] The purpose of the Women's Mission was evangelism and it was organized according to the principles of self-finance, self-support, and self-propagation. It was not under the jurisdiction of the synod of the Presbyterian Church. At an early stage of this organization, it sent out and supported women ministers in many different rural areas. Women ministers who were in charge of the frontier pioneering rural churches were very active and were welcomed by the church members.[69] Women's mission work, however, met with many difficulties and was forced to stop in 1943 because of the oppression of Japanese imperialism. All foreign missionaries were expelled and the Tainan Theological School was closed in 1940. During this period, the Taiwanese people lived under constant threats and political instability. The Japanese kept a close eye on every activity of the Christian churches forcing women's gatherings to stop.[70]

[67]Lay Gau An Shy, ed., Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy, 1,18.
[68]Ibid., 16.
[69]Ibid., 20.
[70]Ibid., 22.

III. The Third Wave of Christian Mission

After the second World War, Taiwan was governed by the Nationalist Party (Kuomingtang) from China. In 1949, the Nationalist Party lost the war with the Communist Party and fled to Taiwan. Since China was ruled by the Communist Party, many denominations transferred their money, property, and human resources to Taiwan. As a consequence, the Christian Church in Taiwan became very complex. In the mid-nineteenth century, there were only Presbyterian Churches established by missions from England and Canada. Before the second World War there were True Jesus Churches which could be traced back to China. During the Japanese colonial period, there were a few more churches from Japan, such as The Japan Christian Church, Puritan Church, Episcopal Church, Methodist Church, Salvation Army and so forth.[71] But the number increased rapidly after the arrival of the Nationalist Party. In 1965, it was reported that "almost 100 denominations, missions and independent individuals have been working in Taiwan trying to establish their own churches."[72]

Moreover, the mission interests and strategies were quite different among different denominations. The churches that had withdrawn from China were more concerned about saving souls than about political and social issues. Though there were Christian women's organizations that had withdrawn to Taiwan together with the Kuomintang government, these mainland Christian women's groups did not

[71]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 93-5.

[72]H. D. Beedy,"Tainan Theological College, Tainan, Formosa," South East Asia Journal of Theology, 7:2 (October, 1965): 17.

have close relationships with Taiwanese Christian women due to the political tension between mainlanders and native Taiwanese. Their activities were more or less limited by the government political policy.[73] There was clearly a gap between the native Presbyterian Church and churches from China.

Though the war was over, most of the churches were very weak financially. Many Christians suffered terrible losses during war time. Many things had to be re-started and re-organized. Tainan Theological School re-opened in 1948 and there were four women students in the following year.[74] Though women were admitted to theological schools, it did not bring much change to the Christian Church as a whole. The president of Tainan Theological School, Hwang Jang Huei, wrote in an article:

> One of the glorious aspects of modern mission is that there has been an unprecedented number of women involved in this world-directed ministry. . . . yet, so far as the role and place of women in the ministry is concerned, the younger churches repeat and imitate more or less the male-dominated pattern. . . . how can the ministry of women work well, when it is clothed in the male pattern ![75]

[73]Shiah Meei Kuan, "Tair uan fuh neu yunn tong jr shern shyue yih yih chu tann" (Primary rsearch on the Taiwanese women's movement and it's theological meaning between 1971-1990) Tainan Tehological Review, 2:1 (December. 1994): 87.
[74]Lay Gau An Shy, ed., Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy, 23.
[75]Hwang Jang Huei, "A Rethinking of Theological Training for the Ministry in the Younger Churches Today," South East Asia Journal of Theology 4:2 (October 1962): 23-4.

I admire Hwang's honesty in his self-reflection as the president of this theological school, and his description of the reality of the church. His criticism is valid even today.

During this period, the Women's Mission Section was revived. The one in South Taiwan was re-organized in 1953. In that meeting Rev. Hwang Wuu Dong was selected to be the advisor and the outcome of this choice was interesting but ironic. As the record states,

> The revived women's mission is not to argue for women's right in disturbing the church and bring shame on the Lord's name. It is better to follow Mary's step in helping the church and reward the Lord's love.【sic】

The Women's Mission Section was a component of South Presbyterian Church and was under the South Presbyterian Synod.[76] The first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan met in 1951. The Women's Mission Section in the North and the South united as the "Women's Mission" in 1959. Later, in 1983 it was renamed as the "Women's Ministry Committee." Over the course of its history, women's ministry has changed from participating in frontier ministries to assisting in the organization of women's programs for local churches.[77] As a consequence, Taiwanese Christian women's ministry, which had included active involvement in evangelism, became limited and subordinated, such as in playing traditional women's roles as good helpers and supporters of the Christian church.

[76]Lay Gau An Shy, ed., Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy, 30.
[77]Ibid., 33.

This state of affairs remained until recently, when the World Council of Churches initiated the decade of "The Churches in Solidarity with Women." In 1988, Christian women in the Taiwan Presbyterian Church became conscientized and they have moved forward in the struggles for justice and freedom.

When we look back to Christian mission and women's ministry in the Taiwanese Christian church, we can see the oppression of different colonizers in the past several centuries. The Christian church was also trapped in Western Christian ideologies and a male dominated church system. The church did not respect people of other faiths. Taiwanese women had long suffered under the Confucian feudal society. Would the Christian church liberate or betray women? Will it critique patriarchal culture or help to maintain the status quo?

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Like many Asian countries, Taiwanese society is multicultural and multireligious. Though Christianity has been introduced into Taiwan for many centuries, Christians comprise only about 3% of the whole Taiwanese population. Christianity is considered a foreign Western religion in many aspects.[1] Taiwanese women are marginalized in society. Whenever they want to break from traditional culture or convert into Christianity, they have to face strong resistance from their families. Family plays a very important function in Taiwanese society. As Taiwanese anthropologist Chern Shyang Shoei observes, " Taiwanese family system centers around the father - son family."[2] Marriage is the only way for women to receive identity and position within this patriarchal system. Family plays a decisive role in women's lives. Thus, when discussing women's religious experiences, the background of their family and religious practices should not be neglected.

I divided the women I interviewed into three groups according to their stories and religious backgrounds: (A) those raised in Christian families, (B) those married into Christian families, (C) those who were converted as a result of special healing experiences. I would

[1]Hwang Bor Her, Ben shiang chu tour tian de tzyy min, 1-2.
[2]Chern Shyang Shoei, "Jong gwo sheh huey jye gow yeu tzuu shian chorng bay," (Structures of the Chinese society and the ancestoral worship) Jong hwa wen huah fuh shing yueh kan (Journal of the renaissance of Chinese culture) vol. 11, no. 6 (May 1990): 33.

like to present their experiences as Christian women and examine under what conditions they have encountered Christianity? Who and what influenced them most? What kind of support and power have they found in Christian faith? How do they understand and relate to God and Jesus? Do they see any changes as necessary? Have they found their power of renaming themselves and the world?

I. Various Experiences of Becoming Christian

A. Being Raised in a Christian family

Ten of the Christian women I have interviewed were raised in Christian families and their religious experiences began in early childhood. From the interviews I have conducted and the testimonies I have found in Neu-shiuan, it is clear that the parents' religious attitude played a decisive role in their religious formation. The influences of the mothers were particularly important since they were responsible for raising their children.

Many of the baptized women I interviewed emphasize how their mothers' devotion and strong faith influenced their religious lives. When they were growing up, they attended worship services with their mothers since mothers brought young children with them wherever they went. Some of them recalled that they were eager and happy to go to Sunday School and attend other services with their mothers. But others said they disliked being forced to attend various services of the church. They participated passively and felt angry inside.

Lin Meei, a thirty-seven-year old woman with a high school education, is the principal of a private kindergarten. She recalled:

> Ever since my early childhood, whenever there were services in the church or outdoor evangelistic gatherings, my mother always brought me along with her. Since I was the only child of my family I had to follow her everywhere. I did not understand what the preacher was saying and I also could not understand why my mother had to attend so many services. Anyway I did not feel bad attending so many services. I could play by myself or with some other children who also came with their parents. And my mother would buy something for me after the service to encourage me to cooperate with her.[3]

Since she was the only child of her family, it was good for her to go out to play with other children and see different places. But if children were forced to attend too many services with adults, they might rebel and resist. One woman said she hated to attend services which were held in different family homes each week. Mrs. Hwang Taur, who is the eldest daughter of her family, has four younger sisters. She is also teaching in a private kindergarten and has received a high school education. She is thirty-five and has three children. She describes her religious experiences at her early age:

> I considered going to Sunday School each Sunday morning as alright, but I really hated to attend prayer meetings and family services on Wednesday and Friday evenings. In those services,

[3]Mrs. Lin Meei, interview by author, Tainan, Taiwan, 13 June 1993.

most of the people were adults and they were not interesting to me. As a student in the primary school, I really could not understand why my mother forced me to attend so many services. I wondered why I could not have free evenings for my own study and why I could not spend Sunday playing with my friends. Sometimes I even had to take my four younger sisters with me to attend family services when my parents were busy at work. But I dared not say no to them since I had been scolded harshly once when I refused to go.[4]

When these women looked back at their early experiences of Christian faith and the ways their mothers (or parents) treated them, they emphasized that religious teachings taught by their mothers (or parents) helped them very much as they grew up. These teachings included keeping good faith, loving your neighbors, living in thankfulness and praying to God always. Those teachings become principles of their lives which made them feel confidence in their own moral behavior. Church activities, especially the Sunday School, is for fun during their childhood, but once they grew up they began to see the strength of the faith of their mothers or parents. They considered the example of their parents in building a Christian family as a loving and supportive community as very important to their lives. The strong support between their parents is an important role model for their own marriages. Of course not every Christian family has such a good and healthy atmosphere. There are women from unpleasant

[4]Hwang Taur, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 9 June 1993.

Christian families who wonder why the Christian faith was powerless in changing their family life. Their religious attitude toward God was shaken. Yet Christian faith still plays an important part in their lives, especially after they married. Many of these Christian women confess that the faith in God which they received from their mothers is the only strength that supports them in times of crises. It empowers them to stand up again to face challenges in their lives.

There is a saying in Taiwanese: " Women's destiny is like a seed," which means women's fate depends on her marriage. If she married a good husband and has a happy marriage, she is like a seed fallen on fertilized land. As she can enjoy her life abundantly, she will not be miserable during her whole life. Though Taiwan is a modern society, there are still many traditional bondages which control women tightly and invisibly. Modern Taiwanese women receive better education than the older generation and are allowed to enjoy more freedom and are given more work opportunities outside of home. But once they get married, tensions and conflicts in marriage frequently occur. It is due to the old ideology that women are inferior to men and that submission is a woman's virtue. This is especially applicable to married women. Taiwanese women's situation is just like what Mercy Amba Oduyoye had observed that:

the general pattern has given the impression that women do not form a legitimate part of the human community but are beings who are to be benevolently listened to and then passed over.[5]

In many parts of the world, women's subordinate situation has hardly changed over the length of human history.

Many of these Christian women confessed that they developed a stronger faith only after they got married. This implies that marriage to them is more or less a crisis which they have to face. If they want to sustain their marriage successfully, they must go through many difficulties and crises. Sometimes it is related to personal character or sometimes it has to do with relationships with the in-laws.

Some of the women also confessed that when they were young they did not feel the importance of having a strong faith. They did not attend church frequently, for they were busy with their own professional careers. They left the church or were not enthusiastic in religious practices, yet the crisis they faced brought them back to church again. Whenever there are conflicts and tensions between the couple, the parents-in-law (especially the mother-in-law) will intervene and sometimes make things more difficult. They will talk to their own mothers and find support. Some of them feel ashamed to bother their original family, and are eager to ask God for help through constant prayers. They found that faith, hope, love, and

[5]Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Reflectiions from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's experience and Liberation Theologies," in Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader, ed., Ursula King (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 26.

courage as taught by Christianity empowers them whenever they felt depressed or frustrated. Many of them said that they are really thankful that their mothers forced them to attend Sunday School in their early childhood. The strong faith they have developed has helped them to endure the difficulties of their lives.

From their story telling, I can see the strength in women's lives. Whether the strength comes from their Christian faith or from the supports of their mothers/parents, they can live their lives in courageous ways and bear the unbearable burdens of life.

Stories of women's lives present a clear picture of sexual discrimination within the human society, whether in the First or in the Third World. How can male theologians in the Third World simply ignore the issue of sexism and assume that "in their world, where men and women know their place and play their role ungrudgingly and no one feels suffocated by society's definition of femininity and masculinity?"[6]

Yet, there is one thing which I consider very important which is not there in these women's story-telling. This concerns the "power of changing" and the power of daring to face confrontation. This makes me think of what bell hooks has said:

> If women always seek to avoid confrontation, to always be "safe", we may never experience any revolutionary change, any transformation, individually or collectively.[7]

[6]Ibid., 27.
[7]bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 64.

But when I carefully read through the interview materials and though it was not easy to see how these women articulated their sense of power yet their lives show how steady faith has firmly grounded them even in difficult circumstances.

B. Being Married into Christian Families

This group of women is larger in number than those who are converted to Christianity themselves. It is due to the old Taiwanese ideology: "Jiah ji swei ji, jiah goou swei goou," It means a woman shares the fate of the man she marries, no matter who he is. When she marries a man, she should adjust herself to her husband's way of life, even to his way of thinking, whether it is right or wrong. For the husband is the master of the family. This ideology is especially powerful in determining religious practices for a married woman. It is interesting to mention here that often a woman's Christian parents will make a deal with the husband's family to allow their daughter to keep her Christian faith if her marriage family is non-Christian. But they insist that a daughter-in-law who is not from the Christian religious background must join the Christian church. Devoted Christians consider converting people of other faiths as important in showing their loyalty to God. So, when there is a person who marries into a Christian family, the person is expected to respect the Christian faith of the family. Christians cannot bear to lose their daughters to other religions. It is due to the strong ideology which comes from the Western missionaries that Christianity is the only true

religion and that the Christian God is the only true God, who can grant salvation and eternal life. This kind of Christian faith can easily be found among many traditional Christians. For example, many articles in Neu-shiuan state that God gives everything to humankind, even God's beloved son Jesus Christ, for saving sinful human beings. Human beings can respond to God's love by converting people to Christianity.[8] This strong and exclusive ideology of Christian faith causes unpleasant feelings and even oppresses women from other religious backgrounds who marry into a Christian family.

There is a woman in this group, who complains about this condition. Wu Ming Jen, aged forty-four, has four sons and works as a business secretary in a private company. She also helps her husband as a part-time accountant in their own factory. She said:

> I felt it was quite an unequal treatment of non-Christians by the Christians. Before I married into my husband's family, I was a Buddhist and I felt good about it. But my parents-in- law insisted so much that since I became one of their family I had to attend the church and learn to be a Christian. Yet, when they married off their daughter they did not allow this to happen to her.[9]

The marriages of people with different religious backgrounds have trouble sometimes. There are also Christian girls who are asked to give up their Christian faith when married into a non-Christian family.

[8]see article of Chern Shinn Bor and others in Neu-shiuan No. 229 (February, 1984): 1-7.

[9]Mrs. Wu Ming Jen, interview by author, Tainan, Taiwan, 6 August 1993.

Mostly this is an issue for women and not men because women are asked to be submissive to their husbands and their husband's family in almost every aspect. Women's submission to their husbands and to their husband's family is considered moral or virtuous for women. It is not regarded as a violation of human rights. Taiwanese women who live under such a situation can only try to discover the empowering aspect of Christianity and to accept it gradually. Or they may resist privately and pretend they are passively obedient.

When these women from different religious backgrounds first married into a Christian family, they went through a time of resistance to the oppression caused by the patriarchal family system. This system did not respect their consciousness as an independent person who should decide her own religious practices. Some women tried to find excuses in order to avoid going to church on Sundays after they married. Some unavoidably had to go with their new family and felt curious about the Christian church. For example, Mrs. Wu Ming Jen described how she had tried to go somewhere on Sundays:

> As I have said previously, I am a devoted Buddhist. So, at the very beginning after I married I tried hard not to go to church. I called my older sister early Sunday morning. I asked her to visit me a few minutes before ten o'clock (usually Sunday services begin at ten in the morning for most congregations); then I could have the excuse to go somewhere else, instead of the church. Each Sunday I tried to ask someone to come. But this situation could not last long. A few months later, I could not

ask my family to come to see me so frequently. Then I began to attend the church with my husband and parents-in-law.[10]

There were also cases in which some mothers did not consider daughters as really belonging to their family because someday these daughters would marry off into other families. As a result, these mothers did not ask their daughters to participate in the family's religious activities, such as ancestor worship. They would prefer their daughter to follow the religious practices of her future husband's family so as not to cause difficulties for the daughters. Two women shared their experience in this regard. Lay Meei Chian, a thirty-six-year old house wife, has two sons and one daughter. She graduated from a junior school. She comes from a big family with twelve brothers and sisters, and she is the youngest one of her family. She said:

> Since my childhood, my mother has never asked me to help her in preparing offerings or participating in ancestor worship. I think because I am the youngest in my family that she loves me and does not want my help. Yet, she told me sometimes that as a girl I do not need to worship the ancestors because no one knows what kind of religious family I will marry into.[11]

Another woman, Lin Yi, is fifty-four years old, and has received a high school education. She has two sons and a grandson, and still works as an accountant in a bank. She also talked about her similar experience:

[10]Ibid.

[11]Lay Meei Chian, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 4 August 1993.

My mother is a devoted Buddhist. But she married off her two daughters into Christian families. My mother always said that to marry into a Buddhist family is too complicated because one needs to prepare offerings according to different religious festivals. It is much easier to marry into a Christian family. So my mother asked Mei-por (a professional female match maker) to find a Christian family for my elder sister and me to marry into.[12]

Women who have their own devoted religion feel resistance to Christian faith when they first marry into a Christian family. Some of them pretend to obey the husband and parents-in-law in order to keep peace and to be a good daughter-in-law. Yet, they did feel discrimination and oppression because they were not allowed to follow their own religion. Women who have no religious background find it easier to accept Christian faith in their new married life. Women who have other religious practices besides Christianity, on the other hand, have to go through a process of resistance, acknowledgment and acceptance.

The Constitution of Taiwan acknowledges that every person has his/her own freedom in deciding his/her own religious practices. This is stated as a basic human right. Yet, in most cases, it does not offer protection for women in choosing their private religious practice. Religious practice at home, such as ancestor worship, discriminates against women. Women are not allowed to be the one who

[12]Lin Yi, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 6 August 1993.

can inherit her ancestor's wooden tablet (This would imply that she is the head of the family). Her children cannot follow her family name (unless in the special case that a husband is married to a wife's family). However, women work hard to cook and prepare food and offerings for ancestor worship. Women only share the portion of hard work in religious activities.

Women who married into Christian families went through the process of resistance and acceptance. After a period of time, most of the women I interviewed accepted Christianity as their personal religion. The main reason they cited that has led them to accept Christianity is the kind attitude and gentle behavior of their parents-in-law (the mother-in-law plays an important role), and also the loving atmosphere of their new family. In their testimony, they confessed that Christian families generally have more equal treatment of women than non-Christian families in certain aspects. It also depended on her original family background. Mrs. Wu Ming Jen said:

> I was moved by my parents-in-law, they were very kind to me. They did not urge me to be baptized. But they did encourage me to go with them whenever they attended church services. They did not treat me as some one who had authority above me. My mother-in-law, taught me many things. She was not the kind of traditional mother-in-law who was authoritative and commanding. I came to think since my parents-in-law are such kind persons then Christianity must be a good religion.[13]

[13]Wu Ming Jen, interview by the author, 6 August 1993.

Mrs. Lay Meei Chian also mentioned her experience of marrying into her Christian husband's family. She said:

> The greatest difference between my husband's family and my own family is that women and men can eat at the same table. When I first married into my husband's family I was really surprised by that and I thought it was because they were Christians that they did not have strong discrimination against the daughter-in-law as in my own family. I came from a very traditional big family in which the men always eat first. Children would sit at a separate small table beside the adults. After the men have eaten enough then it is the turn for women. I like the way that my parents-in-law treat me kindly and equally.[14]

Mrs. Lin Yi recalled how her mother-in-law had encouraged her not to be baptized before the death of her own parents. She said:

> Since my own mother decided to marry me into a Christian family, I believe that she would not care if I became a baptized Christian. Yet my mother-in-law is such an understanding person. She advised me that it would be better for me to be baptized after my parents were dead. She thought when my parents died, it would be better to pay tribute to them in their funerals and honor their spirit. After that I can decide by myself whether to be baptized or not.[15]

From their story-telling, we can see that a Christian family with good behavior, kind encouragement, and comparatively equal treatment of women can help women convert to Christianity. Women do not simply

[14]Lay Meei Chian, interview by the author, 4 August 1993.
[15]Lin Yi, interview by the author, 6 August 1993.

submit themselves to traditional authoritative oppression. They observe the situation and wisely try to exercise power and make decisions for themselves in different ways. There are women who willingly become Christians because they want to respect their husbands' religious practices. But somtimes they are disappointed by their husband's bad treatment of them and turn to their original religion. We can also see that the mothers-in-law who offer good support and are willing to wait for their daughter-in-law to make her own religious decision can promote a more harmonious and successful relationship between the two generations. Christians can no longer convert people from other faiths as if Christianity were a superior ideology. They should not adopt the hostile attitude that some missionaries and zealous Christians have. From these women's testimonies, compassionate love and respect of people of other faiths are fundamental for us to live together as a family in human community. Many women whose basic human rights have always been neglected by the patriarchal social system and traditional customs now demand that their needs be recognized and they be treated as integrated persons.

C. Encountering the Healing Power of Christianity

Among the twenty women whom I interviewed, only one of them became a church goer (not baptized yet) because of a particular healing experience. She is a middle-aged woman who has received elementary education. She was very unhappy in her marriage, which was arranged by her mother. She dislikes her husband because he is too small

compared to her size and too quiet. She greatly regrets her submission to her mother's decision. She has attended the church for about thirty-nine years. She comes to the church every Sunday unless something important interrupts her. Though she comes to the church frequently, she is still not prepared for baptism. Mrs. Horng Yuh described her encounter with Christianity:

> When I was about twenty-five years old, my three-year-old daughter became sick suddenly. She did not speak and ate nothing for days. I was extremely nervous at that time. I took her to see many doctors and visited many temples. It seemed nothing could help her. When I was extremely distressed, my mother suggested that it might be helpful to ask the Christians to pray for her. Anyway, I thought I had to try every possibility. Then, I took my daughter to see an evangelist and asked him to save my daughter. It was a real miracle. My daughter began to eat something after his prayer. Then, a few days later when I passed by a small shrine, I spat phlegm on the wooden statue, which could not rescue my daughter. Since then I joined the church. I think Christianity is a powerful religion with efficacy.[16]

Taiwanese people emphasize "ling-yann" in their religious belief.[17] This means they judge a religion as good or bad depending on how the gods and goddesses of a religion respond to their supplications. Gods and goddesses with extraordinary efficacy are the better. For example,

[16]Horng Yuh, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 12 August 1993.
[17]Shyu Chian Shinn and Jeng Lian Ming, eds., Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy, 18.

there was a story in Neu-shiuan describing how a woman was once possessed by evil spirits. She could not find the way to get out of their control. Once when she was in a great struggle with the evil spirit, she remembered that calling for Jesus might help. So, she cried out loudly, "Jesus save me, I will believe in you." Then she was released by the spirit and became Christian.[18] Whenever people of other faiths have great misfortune, disaster, or sickness, Christianity will be the last resort for them. It is because Taiwanese folk religion is a deeply syncretic religion. It worships hundreds of gods and goddesses. Taiwanese people who practice folk religion consider that the more gods/goddesses they worship, the more blessings they will receive. They think every religion is good, for religion helps people to have good behavior. If they cannot find help from native religions, they will try Western Christianity. Most of the people who become Christians because of miraculous healing experiences are very devoted at the beginning. As time passes by, if they cannot feel the healing power constantly, they become a bit withdrawn and do not have a strong faith any more, since they judge the value of a religion by its extraordinary efficacy.

The woman whom I interviewed might have a strong syncretic understanding of religion in her mind, and she does not consider baptism as necessary for her. She said as long as she keeps going to church, God will protect her whether she is baptized or not. She does not care about whether baptism would save her soul, as the church

[18]Suen Shya Fei, "Ie su jiow woo" (Jesus save me), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (November, 1993): 59-60.

emphasizes strongly. She dares not tell me honestly that she is keeping another door open, so that she can also ask some other gods/goddesses for help if necessary. Only recently she confesses that she is sometimes worshipping other folk religion gods. But she emphasizes that she does not practice it often and only just when she feels Christian prayers are helpless. Yet, she is convinced that she will not abandon the Christian faith for she is used to services on Sunday mornings and to other outdoor activities sponsored by the church. Besides, she likes the women's fellowship of the church.

From this story we can see that some women come to church because they have experienced the miraculous healing power of prayers in a particular situation. Another important reason for them to keep coming to the church is that they find good support in the Christian faith community. For these women, getting together each week is better than practicing ancestor worship in each private home, which does not offer community support.

II. Women's Sense of Jesus

When asked about their sense of Jesus and God, the women showed more interest and could talk more easily. The religious background of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan has been deeply influenced by the Christ-centered Protestant mission which strongly emphasizes that "Jesus is the only Savior of the world." This means that women have a long history of Christ-centered spirituality. This situation is very

similar to what Kwok Pui Lan has observed of the mission work in China during the nineteenth century. There,

> The little attention paid to the Old Testament is a characteristic not only of the catechism but of most of the religious tracts as well, since many missionary writers came from evangelical backgrounds, and their message was basically Christocentric.[19]

Even now the " Gospel Movement to 2ooo Year" which was started in 1990 by a cross-denominational organization in Taiwan uses a slogan, "Jesus, the Hope for Modern People."[20]

Most of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church tend to be more familiar with teachings in the New Testament and Jesus is the center of pastoral preaching. It is quite easy to find sermons related to Jesus and his teaching. In Neu-shiuan which records one or two sermons in each issue, it is easy to find topics such as "Jesus is the way, the truth and the life," "We love for the Lord loves us," "To be Jesus disciples" and so forth.[21] Traditionally every Presbyterian church would recite the "Apostles' Creed" or the "Confession of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan" at the beginning of Sunday service. Both of these confessional statements emphasize the idea of a Trinitarian God and focus on the unity of God and Christ. Besides that, in many Christian religious book stores there are

[19]Kwok, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927, 43.

[20]"The Gospel Movement to 2000 Year" is a cross-denominational organization. Its aim is to push church growth to become double within ten years, i.e. from 1990 to 2000 C.E. Each denomination which joins the movement is urged to contribute its human resources and financial support to the movement in order to reach the goal of church growth.

[21]See Neu-shuian No. 232, 234, 239.

pictures of Jesus, usually as a white Western man, which are designed to make Christians feel closer to Jesus by giving them a concrete image. Those Western-designed pictures of Jesus are either imported from foreign countries or copied in Taiwan where they are very popular among Christian groups. Traditionally most Taiwanese families are supposed to have a family altar for ancestral worship right in the middle of the living room. Christians who do not practice ancestral worship often have instead, a large framed hanging of "The Ten Commandments" on the wall. This is usually seen in the rural area. A modern Western picture of Jesus is more often seen in the city homes. Some churches have a rule that when a family moves into a new house, they will receive a picture of Jesus. In a way the picture of Jesus is for Christians to show that their religious practice is different from traditional folk religion. From my personal observation I wonder if there is another more subtle psychological meaning behind this. Could it be for the protection of the family as is found in folk religions? It is true that Taiwanese people are not used to thinking of God in an abstract way like the Western people do.

A. Symbol and Relationship

In the Presbyterian Protestant background the decorations in the chapels usually seem empty compared to those of the Catholic and Episcopal Churches in Taiwan. The major symbol within the church is usually a big cross and a Bible in the middle of the sanctuary platform. No other religious picture, candles, or statues can be seen.

For the church insists that the God of Christianity is without image or that no image can represent God fully. Yet Christians accept Jesus pictures easily and nearly every Christian family would hangs a religious picture (especially Jesus) as a symbol of Christian faith. Therefore most Christians tend to feel closer to Jesus. Though the church emphasizes no idol worship in Christianity, yet somehow religious symbols do play an important role in religious feeling and in the relationship between God and human beings. Further, the religious symbols do support people's religious feelings and devotion, whether it is a cross or a picture. This is perhaps partly due to the popular folk religious tradition in Taiwan that each god/goddess would have a figure for people to see and to feel connected to. Taiwanese Christians may thus have a psychological tendency toward such images.

When I interviewed these women about how they felt about Jesus, most of them replied that they feel close to Jesus, because they can always see in Jesus' image a humble and compassionate expression, such as a merciful shepherd holding a small sheep; Jesus praying in the garden, or Jesus knocking at someone's door and waiting for someone to open. They confess that what makes them feel closer to Jesus is that they can "see" him concretely.

Mrs. Hwang Taur, thirty-five years old is a kindergarten teacher. She describes how she feels about Jesus when I asked her about her feelings about Jesus and God. She said:

Theoretically I know Jesus and God they are the same for they are part of the trinity. But in my personal feeling, I felt Jesus

more directly. Because whenever I think of Jesus his picture emerges in my mind. I know that he always takes care of me.[22]

There are many other women who have similar feelings of closeness to Jesus. There was only one of the woman who questioned the white Western image of Jesus. This image makes her feel a bit strange and causes her to wonder why she is worshipping a foreign god. But when she looks at Jesus' picture painted by native artists which present Jesus as a Taiwanese man, then she again feels it is unacceptable because it does not look like "Jesus." Mrs. Shiue Ay, is fifty-one years old. She is a teacher in junior school teaching history. She was originally a Buddhist, as a result of her marriage she became Christian. She shares her feeling about Jesus:

> I have a strange feeling toward Jesus. Sometimes I ask myself why I worship a foreign god? Why is God a Westerner? But if I imagine Jesus as a Taiwanese as the cartoon paint in the Taiwanese Church News then I feel I cannot accept it. Anyway, I do not know exactly. I just tell myself that God almighty is certainly not bothered by a static figure.[23]

One can see how powerful religious pictures are for Taiwanese Christians. The pictures of Jesus and the Christocentric theology in the church mold women's practical images and direct feelings of Jesus. Even someone who is skeptical of Jesus' Western face still cannot get free of it to replace it with the native figure. These women mostly feel comfortable with a traditional Jesus picture. They seem to

[22]Mrs. Hwang Taur, Interview by the author, 9 June 1993.
[23]Mrs. Shuie Ay, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 4 August 1993.

believe that the real Jesus is the same as the pictures they see. Or perhaps what Jesus looks like does not really bother them as long as there is a picture they can see which helps them to more easily relate to Jesus. It is very much the same with the theological thinking of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan which was dominated by Western Christian ideas for a long period of time, especially the Christian doctrine of the "Trinity" which is hard for Taiwanese to understand.

B. Jesus as a Member of the Trinity God

Most of the women believe that Jesus is God-self who is incarnate in human body; that is why Jesus can save people and that is the reason they believe in his salvation. The doctrine of "the Trinity of God" is strongly emphasized in the church, so most of the women think Jesus' divinity is unquestionable or in other words they see no difference between God and Jesus. But when I ask them to think more clearly about the question, "Is there any difference between Jesus and God?," many of the women find it hard to answer because they think that Jesus and God are the same and that is the meaning of Trinity as taught by the church. What differences they can describe refer to the personal differences of Jesus as son and God as father. Jesus is younger and God is old, and God is supposed to be greater than Jesus because a father is supposed to be greater than the son. I ask them, how do they understand the meaning of "Trinity?" How can three persons become one and what is the relationship of the three? Most of them find it hard to understand and try to avoid answering the

question. A few of them would say that is how the church teaches. Some of them feel it does not really matter because God can make anything possible. It is not just these women who have difficulty in answering this question. I also find that even ministers find it hard to explain how can the three be one and how can these three persons of God be present in different historical periods and live a continuing existence from the ancient past to the unknown future. I found that there is a fear of being blasphemous to God in asking this kind of question. It seems that it is better to accept what has been taught and to try to rationalize it.

There was only one woman who understood Jesus as a man sent by God to save people. The reason that she thinks Jesus is a man is because she thinks God is invisible and great. Since Jesus has a human body and was born in a certain period of time in history, then he cannot be God-self. When she is asked, does she still believe Jesus is her savior even though he is a man, she became nervous and did not know how to answer.

Christian women, when describing their feelings and experiences in religious life, are far more at ease than when discussing doctrine. Trinitarian doctrine to them seems unchallengable. Many of them simply believe what the church has taught and prefer not to raise questions. They consider that since they have not received theological education and they do not know much about Christian theology, then they would do better not speak too much about it.

Women need to cultivate theological reflection from within the Taiwanese historical experience and social context.

C. The Precious Image of Jesus for Women

From these twenty women's interviews I found that nearly every one mentioned how Jesus' voluntary sacrifice for humanity touched them deeply. These women are deeply grateful to Jesus for his love for human beings and his care for them when they are in trouble. The most important reason that they admire Jesus as a sacrificial figure, is that this image of Jesus responds to their own life situation. This sacrificial image is a kind of model for sustaining and supporting them in their own troubles. Most of the women are moved by Jesus' love which was so great that he gave his life for them. This encourages them to imitate Jesus and live sacrificial lives.

Mrs. Lin Lih Lih, is forty-seven-year old. She has endured a harsh life under her husband's control. She was forced to give up her hairdressing profession and help in her husband's machinery factory. She lost one arm in a work accident. She describes her feeling for Jesus in this way:

> Whenever I look upon a picture of Jesus nailed on the cross, I feel sad for him, for his voluntary sacrifice. I can feel his pain just like what I have suffered in my marriage. Whenever I feel my life is too hard to bear, I will remember Jesus suffering. His suffering is much more than mine. If he can die for me then

why cannot I endure my life? Jesus empowers me whenever I feel heavy in my heart.[24]

Women admire Jesus' patience and suffering. For the most part they do not feel any insufficiency in this image of suffering, for it is a picture of themselves. This situation is similar to what Chung Hyun Kyung found in Asian women's situation. She said:

> The image of a suffering Jesus enables Asian women to see meaning in their own suffering. . . . As Jesus' suffering was salvific, Asian women are beginning to view their own suffering as redemptive.[25]

Yet, I wonder if these images of Jesus' sacrifice only empowers and sustains women in their suffering and does not liberate them so they might argue and ask for changes in their situation? Kwok Pui Lan found that "Chinese women referred to Jesus' attitude toward women to support their demand for equal status and recognition in the church and in society."[26] Why has this not happened for twentieth century Taiwanese Christian women even though we are a neighboring country and bear a similar cultural heritage. Chung Hyun Kyung found out that in Asian women's writing there were new images of Jesus emerging, for instance Jesus as liberator, Jesus as Mother, Woman, and Shaman,[27] yet all of these are not yet emerging for Taiwanese Christian women. I consider the different Asian voices that Kwok Pui Lan and Chung Hyun

[24]Mrs. Lin Lih Lih, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 19 August 1993.
[25]Chung Hyun Kyung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 54.
[26]Kwok, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927, 51.
[27]See Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 62-66.

Kyung have mentioned are due to their different contexts, and to the fact that, Asian women who are known by their publishing are radical women theologians. They certainly present a different picture from ordinary grassroot church women. The majority of ordinary Taiwanese Christian women have not yet heard the message of women's theology of liberation. I believe that once women's theology starts to grow and to develop in Taiwan, Taiwanese Christian women will be better equipped to speak out.

Though Christianity once liberated Taiwanese women to have equal rights to education, it did not change much of women's situation and position in the patriarchal Taiwanese society. I consider that the most important reason for Taiwanese women's passive acceptance of their heavy burden and lack of power to liberate themselves is due to the male dominated Christian church and the historical, political background of Taiwan.

Male pastors easily emphasize that the virtue of Christian women is submissiveness which reflects the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus, and his own submissiveness to his Heavenly Father even to the point of dying on the cross. This model of faithfulness to God is also supposed to be the way that women are to be faithful to the church and to their family. I can easily find this kind of preaching in Neu-shiuan. For example, a male pastor preaches explicitly on how to be the Lord's disciple. He emphasizes three points. They are (1) Voluntary suffering; with no other intention. (2) Serve the Lord with

your whole hearts. (3) Absolute obedience and total sacrifice.[28] The male pastor's preaching and male assumptions of mental superiority play an authoritative role in controlling women.

Along with the male dominant hierarchy of the church the tragic history of foreign domination of Taiwan also plays an important part in keeping women in their passive position. Taiwan has suffered through a long series of foreign conquerors since the beginning of her history. Even now near the beginning of the twenty-first century Taiwanese still suffer from psychological insecurity. Taiwanese people are afraid that they will be swallowed up by Chinese Communism (The Koumintang government, which resides in Taiwan and is a powerful force in Taiwanese politics, insist that there should be only "One China" under Kuomintang rule. Such a policy courts danger from the Mainland communist government and constitutes an implicit threat to the potential safety of both the Kuomintang and the people of Taiwan). The Taiwanese people have never had their own voice in deciding their future and have never had dignity as a free people. Under such a long exploitive history of terror and political control, the Taiwanese people have been molded into a mentality of passiveness and fear. One frequently hears how Taiwanese mothers teach their children only to listen, not to talk, in order to avoid unnecessary trouble. Women bear the triple burden of: 1) Taiwanese cultural patriarchy, 2) Androcentrism and male domination of Christianity and Christian churches, and 3) Foreign domination. Of these three oppressions, men

[28]Tarng Jinn Shiuan, "Tzwo juu men twu" (To be Lord's disciples), Neu-shiuan No. 232 (July, August, 1984): 1-5.

endure only one. It follows almost without saying that women's silence is a survival strategy. Under this survival strategy, though, women seem passive and quiet. Their power is presented in a different way, that is, that of bearing their particular responsibilities, being courageous and being enduring mothers sustaining Taiwanese history.

In this context the sacrificial suffering and compassionate love of Jesus feels precious to women. Many of these women are convinced that they have experienced Jesus as having listened to their prayer and having responded to them through his spirit of compassionate love. Many of them testify that when they are in trouble they pray to Jesus more than to God. And they are convinced that they have received answers from Jesus either immediately or after a long period of time.

D. Discourse on Women and Jesus

The interviews show that Jesus's maleness is not problematic to the Taiwanese Christian women whom I interviewed. I think that there are many ways for women to work out their christology. For instance, Philippino woman theologian, Virginia Fabella's article, "A Common Methodology for Diverse Christologies?", presents two cases. In the Phillipino context Jesus is a liberator who will bring the people out of captivity into full humanity. In the Korean context, Jesus must be a priest of "han" for the "minjung" women.[29] Taiwanese Christian women emphasize Jesus' victorious and salvific sacrifice. They believe that

[29]Virginia Fabella, "A Common Methodology for Diverse Christologies?" in With Passion and Compassion, ed., Virginia Fabella and Merecy Amba Oduyoye (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 111-2.

since Jesus is divine he must be different from human men. He must not have any weakness as men have. And no human men can be compared to Jesus in his divinity. Jesus equally loves all human beings. This is also similar to Chinese women's attitude towards Jesus which is presented in Kwok Pui Lan's book: "The maleness of Jesus did not seem to be an issue for women and Christian women emphasized there was no distinction between the sexes in Christ in their religious writings."[30] The attitude of many Taiwanese Christian women is conformity rather than trying to gain more rights or a better lifegiving status for themselves. Yet, the over emphasis upon Jesus' voluntary suffering limits women, who need to learn to raise questions about their lives just as Chung did when she asked: "For Asian women self-denial and love are always applied to women in the church as they are in the family. But why isn't this teaching applied to men?"[31]

Taiwanese Christian women have begun to open their eyes to see reality in the church as well as in patriarchal society through the movement of "the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity With Women" which is being promoted by the World Council of Churches.[32] This ecumenical movement should also help Taiwanese Christian women to hear women's theological discourse from different parts of the world and to enable us to find new paradigms as Christian women.

[30]Kwok, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927, 46.
[31]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 55.
[32]The decade of the "Churches in Solidarity With Women" especially focuses on women's issues in the church and tries to promote women's participation in decision-making. It also encourages women to make their own theological refletions relating to every aspects of women's experiences. The decaade is from 1988 to 1998.

Jesus' maleness is not an issue to Taiwanese women, and Jesus' image as a suffering servant is seen as empowering and redemptive to Taiwanese women's life experience. Yet, holding on to these limited images of Jesus may prevent women from asking for liberation from real oppressions. These images have reinforced women's sense of inferior self-value and self-concept at different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness. On the other hand, as Western feminist theologians have pointed out, there is a long history of Christian male theology which focuses on the triumphal Christ, Christ as Victor, at the expense of Christ as Victim. Here there is a danger of teaching a christology which reaches out to the victor rather than the victim in society. As in the book, Violence Against Women ,

> Christ the (male) Son and King becomes the Victor, so the sons of men are entitled to reign as victors in their domain. and if the reasoning is that "a man's home is his castle," then (as "king") he is entitled to rule over its occupants.[33]

Jesus as a man with divine power offers a model in which only men share the image of God and neglects those who are not male and those who are down-trodden. Elizabeth A. Johnson warns:

> If the model for sharing in the image of Christ be one of exact duplication, similar to the making of a xerox copy, and if Christ be reduced to the historical individual Jesus of Nazareth, and if the salient feature about Jesus as the Christ be his male sex,

[33]The Taskforce Report to General Synod 1986 of the Anglican Church of Canada, Violence against Women: Abuse in Society and Church and Proposal for Change (Toronto: Anglican Book Center, 1986), 46.

then women are obviously excluded from sharing that image in full.[34]

The traditional Western Christian theology's focus on Jesus's maleness, his salvor image, and his authority as central norms is not just harmful to women who do not qualify to be counted as "in God's image," but also does injustice to people in other faiths. From Taiwanese history we also can see how zealous Dutch missionaries preaching the Gospel destroyed the aboriginal religion.[35] Likewise "when Western Christians brought Jesus to Asia, many also brought with them opium and guns."[36] Of course Taiwanese women's submissive reality might not have the same cultural origins as the experience of Western women as analyzed by Western feminist theological discourse. In fact Taiwanese women inherit much from Chinese cultural bondages. It is necessary to recognize the different cultural setting of women's oppression and we do need to pay attention to different voices. I quote from Paul F. Knitter's book of No Other Name? , he says:

Dorothee Solle can even describe much of christology as "Christofacism" in the way it has disposed of or allowed Christians to imposed themselves upon not only other religion but other cultures and political parities that do not march under the banner of the final, normative, victorious Christ.[37]

[34]Elizabeth A. Johnson, She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 72.
[35]See Chapter One for Taiwanese historical background.
[36]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 55.
[37]Paul F. Knitter, No Other name?: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 164.

We as Taiwanese Christians live within a pluralistic ethnic and religious context and have gone through a colonial history which should teach us not to neglect the danger which may be caused by oppressive religious ideology. Taiwanese Christian women should also be very clear that when we admire Jesus' compassionate love and voluntary sacrifice we are not to nail ourselves to the cross at the same time in acts of self-denial, but we are to see the power of Jesus' love as "the fundamental power of life, born into us, 【which】 heals, makes whole, empowers, and liberates,"[38] and finally, to see Jesus as the one who calls us to take the risks involved in standing with humankind on behalf of a better world.

White feminist theologians are not the only ones who see the maleness of Jesus Christ as problematic in Western sexist society. Black womanist theologians have developed christologies that reflect their own painful experiences as black people. Womanist theologian, "Kelly Brown Douglas, points out that the image of a blond, blue-eyed Christ neither empowers nor nurtures black people (or any non-white people). It is important for the community to view Christ as One who identifies with the community and in whom the community finds strength. Christ is Black. This blackness of Christ has more to do with commitment to Black freedom than appearance. . . . She meant that Christ is black because God's is supportive in the Black's struggle

[38]Rita Nakashima Brock, Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 25.

for freedom."[39] From all these different discourses on Jesus as Christ and the debates between different theological Christological positions, Christians must know that Christology is not a closed concept nor is it unchangeable. Traditional Christology is not the final, decisive authority in talking about Jesus Christ. It is a man-made dogma, after all, which arose within its particular historical setting. It is an important Christian vocation for women to take up the task of Christology and to "re-image Jesus from the perspective of our own experiences in the world"[40] in ethical praxis and justice making. In our daily ethical praxis "we need to act differently, not in order to uphold Jesus, but rather in order to uphold--support--ourselves. Only in this way does incarnation--God's active presence in and with the world, the flesh, humanity--make sense."[41]

Asian women and female theologians in the third world have also made a contribution to theology by reflecting on the way in which Jesus' mercy and tenderness in befriending humanity is more typical of women's behavior than of men's. Chung Hyun Kyung asserts that Jesus' Lordship is saying "no to patriarchal domination, freeing Asian women from false authority and empowering them to obey only God and not men".[42] Re-discovering Jesus' passion and compassion for women and marginal people frees women from false authority and draws life-giving

[39]Tabitha Wang, "Who do women say that I am?" (Final paper for the course of The Twentieth Century American Theologians, The Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.), 4.
[40]Isabel Carter Heyward, The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation (New York: University Press of America, 1982), 31.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 59.

power from their very experiences.[43] New images of Jesus (liberator, mother, woman, and so forth) offer a direct challenge to traditional Christologies. These new images emerge from women's life stories of survival. We Taiwanese Christian women must always open our ears to hear the voices of downtrodden people. Our minds should open to change, and our mouths should speak prophetic wisdom that awakens our inner selves and that awakens the sleeping church to walk in the way revealed to us by Jesus' liberating ministry. We must always keep this in mind when asking 'Who is Jesus?' 'What is his life ministry?' 'Who does he stand for?' 'And who am I?' 'Whom will I stand with?'

III. Women's Sense of God

A. Women's Traditional Image of God

The traditional God of Christianity is invisible, and without some picture or description it is hard for Taiwanese women to image or make a connection with God. Usually they describe God as a far away, severe, glorious, invisible, untouchable being, too bright to look upon, or too hard to describe and so forth. Why do women experience God as so distant and inaccessible? There seems to be a split between their image of God and the way they trust in God. They feel God is glorious, untouchable. One can hardly reach God's standard of being a good Christian. Yet, theoretically they believe God is love. This contradiction may be due to the Christocentric theological teaching in the church which emphasizes God's love and redemption of humanity

[43]Ibid., 62-73.

through the sacrifice of God's own son Jesus on the cross. Likewise, in the Old Testament God demands that Abraham sacrifice his beloved son Issac to prove his loyalty to God (Genesis 22). To most Taiwanese thinking, God does not seem reasonable. There is a popular joke in the Taiwanese churches that Christians describe the God of the Old Testament as young and stern but the God of the New Testament has became old and merciful. Maybe they are not the same God after all. Women feel distant and fearful with respect to God. The invitation to think more and to talk more about God's image from their own experience is difficult for women to respond to. Here are some examples.

Mrs. Lin Ruey Yau, a sixty-five-year old woman who had retired from teaching in the elementary school, said:

> I just simply believe in God. I believe God takes care of me. I live my life in thankfulness. I only know God is love because God gave Jesus to us. I cannot think about God's image.[44]

Another woman, Mrs. Lin Lih Lih, shared:

> Since I became Christian I feel I am always full of joy. I trust that God helps me and takes care of me. I do not try to image what God looks like. May be the only image that I can refer to is Jesus' image which I usually see in pictures.[45]

Yeh Liang is forty-years old. She is running a small business with her husband. They have two daughters. She said: "When I pray

[44]Mrs. Lin Ruey Yau, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 13 July 1993.
[45]Lin Lih Lih, interview by the author, 19 August 1993.

constantly I feel like a bright circle comes near me. Is it God? I hardly know."[46]

Chern Shiau Lian is fifty-eight years old. Her profession is men's hair cutting. She and her husband manage a barber shop and they have five daughters. She said:

> I do not have any special image of God. I just believe that God is the Creator of the world, the only true God. Sometimes I wonder why we address God as Heavenly Father? I think that is because God is great and has authority like a father.[47]

Many of these women would rather keep the traditional way and address God as father. As I mentioned previously, Jesus' and God's maleness is not an issue because these women believed that Jesus and God are not comparable with human men. Even though some of them did not have a good relationship with their father, yet they feel comforted to have a Heavenly Father to replace their earthly father and give them love and support. Mrs. Lee Koon Chiueh is a house wife, thirty-five years old, with three children. She married into a Christian family and became Christian. She is not yet baptized. She said:

> My father was irresponsible to our family. I hated to see the constant quarrel between my parents. Since I came to the church and know that God is my Heavenly Father, it did not make me upset.

[46]Yeh Liang, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 14 July 1993.
[47]Chern Shiau Lian, interview by the author, 28 June 1993.

I am glad to have a Father in Heaven who will listen to my prayer. And I know He really cares about me.[48]

She thinks that God is divine and really not comparable with human reality. I ask the women I speak with to try to imagine God in a different way, such as God as a mother or something else. Many of them still find it hard to imagine or describe. A few women feeling curious, asked me why the gender of God bothers me since God is invisible. I then asked them if God is invisible, what is God's gender, if you try to define it? Everyone said God is supposed to be male, for we pray to our Heavenly Father so often in the church. There is only one woman who tries to describe an experience she had with God as a warm hand touching her gently when she prayed in urgency. Whenever she sees beautiful flowers she thanks God for creating them for she loves flowers very much. To address God as Heavenly Father has become a custom in prayer. In my own church it is quite common to hear it from prayers both of women and men. Kwok Pui Lan has found that for Chinese women:

> the father image of God cannot be easily appropriated in the Chinese context without causing tension. The notion that God is common father of all humankind has the potential to challenge the authority of fathers in the family. Furthermore, the stern image of the Chinese father does not adequately convey the loving kindness of God and God as a single parent disrupts the symmetry and harmony of the familial symbolism.[49]

[48]Lee Koong Chiueh, interview by the author,Tainan, Taiwan, 21 August 1993.
[49]Kwok, Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927, 42.

This kind of critical response did not appear in Taiwanese Christian women. Taiwanese women found it easy to accept the ready-made answer supplied by the institutional church. I suppose this is because of the oppressive circumstances of Taiwanese society and its political background which has made the Taiwanese insecure about cultivating and presenting their own thoughts. Besides this, most Taiwanese folk religion has a strong ideology of "Fatalism" which makes people passive in accepting their lives as if they deserved what they got. As Chung observed, "Many Asian religion-cultural traditions support this attitude. . . . The teaching of fate makes people think that what happens in their lives is something they deserved. Since their lives are predestined, nothing can be done to change things."[50] In women this ideology perpetuated the attitude of passive acceptance of authority, teaching them to endure with sacrificial dignity.

B. Women's Experiences of God

Though it is hard for most of the women I interviewed to describe or to imagine God's image, yet they are sure about experiences of encountering God. Many of them are convinced that they do experience God taking care of them and listening to their prayers. Most of their trust in God emanates from their faith experiences. Some of them have gone through stages of struggle and have come to realize God's promises in their lives. Some of them do not have particular experiences but generally feel God's protection. Some women have had

[50]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 42-3.

miracle-like experiences which surprised them with a sense of God's power.

Mrs. Lin Lih Lih shared:

> Let me tell you something interesting. Once I went to a place with my husband with our car. There were a few people who wanted us to give them a ride. I was a bit nervous because if found by police we had to pay a fine. Just fifty feet after these people got off our car, there came two policemen and we were safe. Another time that happened in our home. The water tower had some problem, water cannot come out at all. We have changed to new pipes but still no use. Two days later I felt upset with no water. I climbed up there standing beside the water tower to pray, and I knocked at the tower. You know, the water began running out. There were many miracles in my experiences."[51]

A woman wrote her testimony in Neu-shiuan and described her relationship with God:

> Reflecting upon my faith journey, I felt that God is an almighty God, a God above all gods/goddesses when I first joined the church. I dare not offend God or feel close to God. I can only keep God far away in order not to have trouble with blasphemy. But when I know God better, I know that God is the resource of life. God's plan of incarnation for saving people is merciful. . . . I ask God to equip me and to renew me to be

[51]Lin Lih Lih, interview by the author, 19 August 1993.

God's instrument. My relationship with God has changed from fearfulness to close friend.[52]

Usually women feel they have a closer relationship with God than men have. It is easy to find women's religious experiences and testimonies published in different religious magazines. Women are also willing to share their religious experiences with others and give their testimonies during services.

C. Emerging Images of God

It was not until recently that I found a Christian woman who addressed God as "Mother". The woman has since died. She was a pastor's wife who got cancer. Before she died she wrote an article encouraging her children to be brave and praying that God would be her children's mother accompanying and taking care of her children. When she was in hard pain and despair, she asked God to accompany her and to hold her tight like a mother. This story was published in Tairuan Jiaw Huey Gong Baw (Taiwanese Church News) which is quite new in printing a woman's voice relating a woman's sense of God.[53]

However, Taiwanese Christian women do not feel the gender of God is problematic. They speak of God as invisible. The male language we use to describe God does injustice to God's nature and neglects women's experiences. The traditional patriarchal God language of

[52]Lin Bair Lian, "Woo jao daw le" (I have found), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (November 1993): 52.

[53]See Mrs. Duh Jing Jy, "Miann tuey kuu nann - shaang dih shyh yeong yeuan de ma ma," (Face the suffering - God, the eternal mother) Taiwanese Church News, No. 2238 22 January 1995, p. 6.

Father-God or Lord and King are exclusively male and do not include perceptions of God as loving and protective of those who are vulnerable. As feminist theologian Elisabeth Johnson pointed out, "Images of God are not peripheral or dispensable to theological speech, nor as we have seen, to ecclesial and social praxis. They are crucially important among the many colored veils through which divine mystery is mediated and by means of which we express relationship in return."[54] Johnson continues, "According to Tillich's well-known analysis, symbols point beyond themselves to something else, something moreover in which they participate."[55] In her book, Violence against Women , Johnson states further:

> The language of the Trinity, as the church has reinforced it, is essentially hierarchical, static, and discrete. . . . the trinity has often been used to reinforce the value of a hierarchical order of creation. In this view, hierarchy is understood as the sacred rule of anyone who is a "father-figure," it can reinforce a belief that the male has the right to discipline his unruly wife and children - by force if necessary.[56]

Thus, feminist theologians advocate adding "feminine" traits to the male-image of God in order to balance human experiences of God, giving God both feminine and masculine characteristics. As Chung Hyun Kyung has also found, "Many Asian women believe that an inclusive image of

[54]Johnson, She Who Is, 46.
[55]Ibid.
[56]The Taskforce Report to General Synod 1986 of the Anglican Church of Canada, Violence against Women, 42.

God who has both male and female sides promotes equality and harmony between men and women: a "partnership of equals."[57] In so doing we still cannot know God fully, because all this language does is present different metaphors describing God as father, mother, lover, sisters; yet none of these metaphors can completely encompass God. In Taiwanese culture the folk religions include many goddesses, yet this goddess worship does not necessarily contribute to women's equality. I believe that the language of God should be inclusive, open, and diverse. As Sallie McFague says:

> I would insist, however, that models of God are not definitions of God but likely accounts of experiences of relating to God with the help of relationships we know and understand.[58]

This viewpoint helps women and men allow themselves to cultivate a language of God which opens up to new possibilities, connecting with God in a creative way.

When speaking about the relationship between God and Taiwanese women, I focused on "the dependent relation of individual believers to a transcendent father."[59] Taiwanese Christians tend to believe that Jesus' death was by God's will and that women's suffering is by God's will. We ignore the fact that Jesus was crucified by human power and Romen's authority. This makes us " fail to see the suffering that is built into the social structures in which we all participate and our

[57]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Agian, 48.
[58]Sallie McFague, Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 39.
[59]Brock, Journeys by Heart, 57.

responsibility for the transformation of such structures."[60] We need to learn to know God in ways other than our traditional teachings. As Carter Heyward says, "The God I wish to affirm is God of relation and friendship." She continues, "my images for God include those of sister, lover, amazon, wisdom, mother, and brother more often than those of king, victor, husband, judge and father."[61] I fully agree with Heyward that "to exist humanly is to name the self, the world, and God".[62] It is a challenging task for us as Taiwanese Christian women to name ourselves; however, it is the first step in naming our God and actively participating in constructing the Taiwanese future. Before we proceed in the process of reimaging God, we need models to imitate and to observe. Then we can create our own. Here are two short poems which may help us in imaging God differently and connectedly.

A Korean woman, Lee Sun Ai, created her images of God:

God is movement
God is the angry surf
God is like mother
God is like father
God is like friends
God is power of being
God is power of living
God is power of giving birth.[63]

[60]Ibid.
[61]Heyward, The Redemption of God, 10.
[62]Ibid., 11.
[63]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 50.

Another poem written by a Jewish woman - Malka Heifetz Tussman:

I Know Not Your Way

I know not your ways -

A sunset is for me

A Godset.

Where are you going,

God?

Take me along,

if, in the "along,"

it is light,

God.

I am afraid of the dark.[64]

Here we see God as our mother, our sister, our lover, our friend whom we can really feel close to and touch. It is not necessary for God to be glorious, stern, and too bright to look upon. God is our sustainer, our power of survival. God is the source of our life. God is spirit rising. God is inviting us to know God better, to call God's name in our own voices using our creative, loving vocabulary.

[64]Marcia Cohn Spiegel and Deborah Lipton kremsdorf, eds., Women Speak to God: The Prayers and Poems of Jewish Women (San Diego, California: Women's Institue for Continuing Jewish Education, 1987), 33.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN AND CHURCH

Women have participated in the ministry of the church from the beginning of Christianity in Taiwan. They were missionaries' wives or lay women in the church. Though women's stories in the church have been neglected, their active involvements have never ceased to exist. In this chapter, I try to draw a clear picture of the role of Taiwanese Christian women, their activities and their struggles in the church.

I. Women's Involvement and Contribution in the Church Ministry

From reviewing Christianity's history in Taiwan there is no doubt of women's involvement and contribution in mission work as well as in building the faith community. Due to the fact that the history was written by men, most women's participation and their precious stories have been left out. During interviews most of the women said they were convinced that women did much church work; in general the women worked more than men in the church. Housewives without work outside of the family in the age range between 40 to 60 especially are the backbone of the church ministry. In this age group the women no longer are bound by raising young children and since they do not work outside the home they have more time to participate in church ministry. Middle-aged women are the main body in every local church involved in women's mission ministry at the Presbytery level.

A. Women's Ministry in Its Variety

Women are the foundation of the church's ministry. In every ministry activity there is women's involvement. So crucial is women's enthusiastic participation that one might easily imagine the consequences of a one day women's "strike" in their church activity; in such a situation, the church ministry would hardly move. It is true that women participate in a variety of church ministries. Mrs. Hwang Jin Shing, a thirty-year-old woman who is a housewife and has one daughter, shared:

> I consider that women are important in church ministry in every aspect except in the Board Meeting. Women work hard in Sunday School teaching, ordinary family visiting, hospital visiting, fund raising whenever it is needed, and cooking for community gatherings and so forth.[1]

Another woman Lin Yi observed:

> I consider women's work very important in the church. You can see that in our church women are involved in choir, flower arrangement, cleaning the environment, playing piano in the service, family visiting, Sunday School teaching. . . . Nearly in every ministry women's participation is always more than men. Maybe it is because women are enthusiastic more than men in religion or we have more leisure time to participate; I am not sure about it. Anyway, I can hardly imagine that if a church is without women what will it be.[2]

[1]Hwang Jin Shing, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 4 June 1993.
[2]Lin Yi, Interview by the author, 6 August 1993.

Women not only actively participate in various ministries, women are vitally concerned with the financial needs of the faith community and ministry. Women's groups in the church are always the financially active groups. Even though most of the women do not handle the finances in their families or in the church, their willingness to give money does help church ministry in many ways.[3] As Christine Tse, a theologian from Hong Kong, observed:

> Nowadays, the presence and coordination of a great number of women religious and committed lay women, both single and married, who are working at various levels of church activities, have become essential to the vitality of the Asian church.[4]

Taiwanese Christian women's contribution in the church ministry cannot be denied, but I found that there is a danger in this kind of routine work. Women work hard; yet they seldom raise the question about their decision-making power. In order to have better involvement in ministry, they need to be included in decision-making instead of limiting themselves to the practical implementation of plans. Women's participation in the church can be described in a general picture as:

> In local congregations, women are usually found in limited numbers on governing boards. Their responsibility is usually seen to be on Flower and Music committees, as Deaconess (an office which usually bears no real resemblance to that of Deacon) and

[3]Chern Sheng Jeng, "Neu twu de shiunn liann yeu shyh feng" (Trainning and service of women disciples), Neu-shiuan No. 232 (July, August 1984): 13.
[4]Christine Tse, "New ways of Being Church: A Catholic Perspective," in With Passion and Compassion, eds., Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 90.

Church School teacher. While women do comprise the large majority of active church members and are the sustaining force in almost every congregation, they have virtually no power within its structure, which is usually dominated by male clergy and church officers. As in the larger society, they are viewed as helpers for the men, with their only real talent seen to be in aesthetic matters or in working with children.[5]

This stereotype of women's ministry from both the male and female viewpoints hampers women's participation in a more creative and autonomous way. Why is it that women do not question their lack of full participation in the ministry of the church? They do not question the power dynamic and structure of the church or women's role and position in the religious organization. They do not ask what is the meaning of equal stewardship? They need to question, to ask "How do we improve the status of women in the church? Once these questions are raised, it will be recognized that women's participation has been seen as low-level and superficial, having no effect on the core structure of the church and bringing no contribution to social justice and welfare in terms of human beings' equality before God. If women do not question the unjust social structure and the unequal hierarchy of the church, the oppression of the patriarchal system will never change.

[5]Sarah Bentley Doely, ed., Women's liberation and the Church (New York: Association Press, 1970), 19.

B. Women as the Active Lay Ministers

Most women often eagerly share their life stories and religious experiences with others. Many women are more enthusiastic about visiting those who need comfort even when they do not know them. They easily reach out to people outside of the church through family visiting and hospital visiting; sometimes they also visit the prison. Many women typically go to see sick people frequently at the nearby Christian hospital to pray for those patients who do not reject Christianity and who are willing to talk. Through their kind concern, prayer and help, friendships develop or the sick attend the church after they get well. One finds that whenever there are newcomers in the church they were usually brought in by Christian women; this is especially true in my church. Women are doing very well as lay ministers encouraging people to have faith. They are deeply touched by Jesus' love for the weak and Jesus' redemptive power in people's lives. They imitate Jesus' compassion with the people who need help and people respond to their faith witness.

Women play an important role in carrying out church ministry, actively participating in family visits and hospital visits besides their work in the household. They eagerly share the Gospel stories of Jesus with others and are good models as lay ministers. They think this kind of mission to outsiders is a calling from God to practice the role of good Samaritan. In return, this kind of mission work has helped them grow in their faith and their self-confidence. Mrs. Lin Yi said:

> Since I joined the visiting ministry of women's fellowship of our church. I felt it brought me a lot encouragement. I was so happy when I received feedback from those people whom I have helped. It makes me feel I am respected and useful. Although I work for my family more than twenty years but I seldom receive thanks and encouragement from my family members. This joy is a gift to me.[6]

Another woman, Lay Meei Chian, who also joined the women's fellowship, shared:

> What drives me to fully participate in church ministry, is responding to the love of Jesus. I want to learn Jesus sacrificial and offering spirituality. I am not trying to prove that I am a good Christian I just do what I should do. I find it is a very promising work. And I grow mature in religious experience.[7]

Many women affirm that they learn and grow through participation. When they actively participate they become more aware of the existence of their inner resources and the strength of their spirituality. It is true that "Women's growing reliance on their intuitive processes is, . . . a move in the service of self-protection, self-assertion, and self-definition. Women became their own authorities."[8]

Yet, I also found that for some women their active involvement in ministry, especially their enthusiastic sharing of religious

[6]Lin Yi, Interview by the author, 6 August 1993.
[7]Lay Meei Chian, interview by the author, 10 August 1993.
[8]Mary Field Belenky and et al., Women's Ways of Knowing: the Development of Self, Voice, and Mind (NY: Basic Books, 1986), 54.

experiences with others and their attempts to convert people, are colored by the concept of "Ji-gong-der." This attitude in folk religion in Taiwan is that to store up happiness, you do charitable deeds and thus receive blessings from God. By so doing, they only ask what they can give and try to convert others, but they do not consider their own power or work to change women's position in the church as an institution. The majority of Taiwanese Christian women did enthusiastic evangelization, yet few of them will consider the possibility of equality between women and men or try to reform the home and to improve society. Besides the influence of Taiwanese religious culture, what has kept women silenced? I found that Christian women are caught in a dilemma. The dilemma is derived from Christian teaching which is defined by male viewpoints. Women are asked to involve themselves in evangelization because women are a strong force in church ministry. Yet, although they are active in the church's work, they are not encouraged to be autonomous. Because to be a good Christian woman means cooperating with the church's authority. A Christian woman witnesses to her faith by having a harmonious family (no quarreling with your husband), having well-behaved, high-achieving children, having good health and so forth.[9] Women are taught that whatever they have done in the ministry, if they are not approved of by their husbands and children then they are failures, and what they have to contribute is worthless. The situation is that described by Mary Daly as the oppression of the

[9]See the article of Tang Meng Tzong, "Ren ren chwan daw" (Everyone to evangelize), Neu-shiuan No. 233 (October 1984): 7.

church that "by countless members of the clergy, but indeed by many women. Fascinated by an exalted symbol of 'woman', they are not disposed to understand the distress imposed upon countless real, existing women."[10] Women have long been dominated under patriarchal teachings of womanhood as reflected in obedience, submission and docility. Even now when the Women's Ministry Committee promotes the project of women's consciousness raising, they are careful to prevent conflict and objections from men on this gender issue.

C. Women's Invisibility in the Church

The enthusiastic involvement contributions of women are like a big turning wheel which moves the church forward. It is a pity that women have been involved and contributed a lot in every aspect of the church's ministry but are invisible in the church's power structure. Women's invisibility is due partly to the Taiwanese men-centered social structure, and partly to women's toleration of this sexist society. Women's contributions to the church's ministry are great, yet they are not recognized as important. Women's enthusiastic involvement in family visiting and many other activities is sometimes not appreciated by men and male pastors. I have found negative responses to women's ministry from some male pastors, such as, "Women who are in charge of the family visiting need to have particular, careful training in advice; if they are too talkative they will easily

[10]Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex, 3d ed., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 54.

make mistakes."[11] Another male pastor wrote about the danger of women's participation in ministry:

> You (Women) think you are very enthusiastic and participate in every gathering; yet from my viewpoint you are not really that, because you cannot make right judgments, and you do not know what is right or wrong. Whenever there are divisions in the church it is usually because of women, for you listened but did not understand.[12]

I feel it is very unfair to judge women negatively rather than considering the individual personal character of both men and women. I wonder about women's reaction to this kind of evaluation. Will they be angry about it or appreciate it? I did not find responses in Neu-shuian.

Whenever there is an election of Board members of deacons/deaconess and elders of the church, women are seldom elected. Men are more easily elected than women. This is true even when people know very clearly that the wife of the elected deacons are more capable than the men whom were elected. I believe that part of the reason for this is that women's work is usually not practiced in public; unlike male deacons or elders women do not speak out actively in board meetings or lead services in the church. There is also the negative stereotype of women as talkative and too emotional. Women's work is invisible, private, and usually outside of the church such as

[11]Chern Sheng Jeng, "Neu twu de shiunn liann yeu fwu shyh" (Trainning and service of women disciples), Neu-shiuan No. 232 (July, August 1984): 13.
[12]Jeng Lian Der, "Shyr day fuh neu" (Women in the new age), Neu-shiuan No. 221 (October 1982): 11.

visiting homes and hospitals, and it is not considered as important as that of male leaders doing visible tasks within the church building. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has made a very good analysis of women's powerlessness in the church. She said:

> Women as Church are invisible neither by accident nor by our own default but by patriarchal law that excludes us from Church office on the basis of sex. . . . Religious obedience, economic dependence, and sexual control are the sustaining force of ecclesiastical patriarchy.[13]

The women's question facing the Church requires "an intellectual paradigm shift from an androcentric world view and theology to a feminist conceptualization of the world, human life, and Christian religion."[14] Though Elisabeth speaks from her Catholic background, it also fits the situation of the Protestant church reality. The male-dominated Christian church needs to reconsider its structure of power and power distribution. As Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a woman theologian from Africa, says:

> the problem of power-sharing is a pre-requisite for the realization of co-responsibility. Created equally human, God made women and men stewards of creation and gave us authority to jointly fill the earth and manage it. The present state of the partnership of men and women in all cultures, on all continents and in all churches, is a state of sin. The onesided development

[13]Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Mary Collins, eds., Women-invisible in Theology and Church (Edinburg: T & T Clark LTD, 1985), 4, 8.
[14]Ibid., 9.

of the source of human authority has reduced stewardship to domination, husbanding to control, and complementary to the pate real determining the scope of being for the maternal. Patriarchy has distorted partnership.[15]

For the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, as a member church of the World Council of Churches, the "Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women" is the time for the church to state clearly where it is with women.

D. Women's Critique of the Patriarchal Church

Christian women's involvement in and contribution to the church is a fact needing no argument. But when reflecting upon women's participation, there are some views which need to be corrected. Since I could not hear a critique of the church from the women I interviewed, I turned to look for examples in Neu-shiuan. There are critiques by women of the church, especially in its discrimination against women's full participation. Women are the majority in the church community and actively involved in church ministry. The Christian church has always neglected women's contributions and limited women's participation in higher decision making levels. A woman presents her experience in the church:

It is about six or seven years since I came to this church. I have observed that the participants at each Sunday's worship are always women more than men. For example, last week (17 April

[15]Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Who Will Roll the Stone Away?: The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 53.

1994) there were thirty women and fifteen men. Yet, not long ago when the church elected a new Board seven men were elected and no woman was included. Being a chairperson of Women's Community, I feel I have been delinquent not to ask for a few chairs for women.[16]

Women's participation in higher levels of decision-making is low. At the General Assembly level it is obvious that only a few women can join. In 1994, there were 582 committee members in the General Assembly; among them only 87 were women and within its 41 committees women were chosen to participate in only 15. Only 9.2% of the members of the General Assembly are women.[17] There is a Chairperson of the Women's Ministry Committee in General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan; she represents half of the women members of the church, yet she cannot be a committee member in the General Assembly. She can only observe the General Assembly conference. Since 1985, the Women's Ministry Committee has tried to argue that the chairperson of the Women's Ministry Committee should be a formal delegate to the General Assembly, yet this has failed to pass five times.[18] Finally the General Assembly Conference this year (during 18-21 April 1995) has approved the request from the Women's Ministry Committee that the

[16]Tzeng Lih Shwu, "May shiang leang shing cherng wei huoo bann de shin shyh jieh" (Toward a new world of partnership of women and men), Neu-shiuan No. 292 (July 1994): 18.
[17]Juang Shwu Jen, "Jiaw huey bii shyh fuh neu ma?" (Is the Christian church despise women?), Neu-shiuan No. 292 (July 1994): 6.
[18]Jeng Shinn Meei,"Jiaw huey daw dii tzay pah sher me?" (What are the church afraiding of?), Neu-shiuan No. 292 (July 1994): 4.

chairperson be a formal delegate to the General Assembly beginning in 1996.

A woman complained about the situation of women in her article in Neu-shiuan. She wrote,

> Our church does not encourage women to play the role of Mary, but instead limits women to being Martha all the time and thinks that it is good for church life.[19]

Women are rarely elected as deaconesses or elders, and once they are elected they are not encouraged to speak in the Board meeting. They are expected to play a service role during the meeting. A woman said there was an opportunity for her to accompany her husband attending the Board meeting of the church. She saw that all those speaking were men, who were presenting their ideas strongly, but the few female elders and deaconess sat aside quietly. She felt curious and asked if they were not also deaconess and elders. The minister's wife told her that the female deaconess and elders were there to clean the dishes after the meeting. The woman told herself that she was lucky not to have been elected as a deacon or elder.[20] Another woman expressed her frustration about the church institution:

> Today's church teaches us that deacons and elders must be by men. Ministers' wives are the best colleagues of God for they never get payment. The church emphasizes teaching of justice, equality,

[19]Jih Huey Rong, "You gwo ney fuh yunn tarn neu shing jeau seh" (From national women's movement discuss about women's role), Neu-shiuan No. 255 (May 1988): 16.
[20]Sheu Feng Meei, "Fuh neu de jiau seh yeu ding wey" (Women's role and position), Neu-shiuan No. 244 (July 1986): 16.

democracy and freedom, yet I cannot feel it. I can only complain about my own misfortune that God did not make me as a man.[21]

Women also feel the discrimination from male colleagues if they are capable and active in speaking out. Usually women are expected to be passive and to cooperate in the ministry.[22] So, there is a saying that men make the decisions and women execute the decisions. Some churches practice a policy forbidding a couple from both being elected as deacon/deaconess in the church. This is so in order to allow people from different families to have a chance at involvement in the church's ministry. This kind of policy again limits women's participation in the decision-making level because people tend to elect men(husbands) instead of women (wives) since the teaching of the Christian church has long maintained that the man is the head of the family.

I can find many strong voices critical of the patriarchal church in the Women's Mission magazine, this magazine was considered the pioneer for women's equality in the church. It points to the distance between women's voices in the Women's Mission magazine and the passive attitude of the majority of local church women. One thing which is sure is that women whom I interviewed tend mostly to be traditional women who do not complain to the church and do not receive much information about feminist consciousness. Yet, of the women's voices present in the Neu-shiuan, many are active participants in the

[21]Shyu Jia Jing, "Nii yaw cherng wei maa day hair shyh maa lih yea?" (Whether you want to be Martha or Mary?), Neu-shiuan No. 261 (May 1989): 21.
[22]Tsay Shwu Yu, "Fuh neu shyh gong yan tao huey jean jieh" (Introduction on women's mission), Neu-shiuan No. 258 (November 1988): 11.

Presbytery and General Assembly level of the Women's Ministry Committee; they are aware of the problem of women's limitation in the Christian church.

Taiwanese Christian women though possessing virtues of hard work and good cooperation, still do need stimulation from outside. We need to hear women's voices from different regions of the world, so that we can "reexamine our church structure, traditions, and practices in order to remedy injustices and to correct misinterpretation and distortions that have crippled us."[23]

II. Women's Fellowship as a Sisterhood Association

Women's fellowship is playing an important and active role in every local church. There is a woman saying that, "if the women's fellowship is alive and active then it will bring life to their families, churches and even the whole country."[24] Though I feel this saying puts too much of a burden on women's shoulders, that is assuming the success or failure of the family or the church as the responsibility of women, yet it also states the truth that women's fellowship groups are really important in church ministry.

Women's fellowship is usually organized by lay women. These are autonomous groups of women where women can freely exercise their talents of program and financial budget planning. In the case of my

[23]Yong Ting Jin, "New Ways of Being Church: A Protestant Perspective," in We Dare to Dream, eds., Virginia Fabella and Sun Ai Lee Park (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 44.

[24]Tzeng Huey Hua, "Tsorng harn gwo jiaw huey fuh neu shiunn liann kann tair uan fuh neu yeu jinn shiou" (From Korean church women's training to look at Taiwanese women and further study), Neu-shiuan No. 243 (May 1986): 16.

church, there are around 30 to 35 women who participate in each gathering. They usually meet Sunday evenings for choir practicing. They have a monthly gathering on the first Thursday night of each month. The monthly gathering is designed according to women's needs and interests. There are a variety of programs such as birthday celebrations, Bible studies, flower arrangement, culinary arts and so forth. Sometimes they invite different specialists from the outside to address themes that relate to religious life, women and family, women and law . . . etc. Women practice their leadership fully in the fellowship.

As I have mentioned in chapter one, during the early stages of Women's Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan women evangelists were sent out to do pioneer work of developing the church in rural areas. Since 1959 when it was reorganized as the "Women's Mission," it became focused on the traditional roles of women and women's education and ministry. Women were no longer sent out as evangelists. Yet, women's fellowship is still playing an important role in Christian women's lives. It is a community which binds women's lives together. In the women's fellowship gatherings, women create better inter-relationships. They learn from each other and benefit from each woman's special talents. Women enjoy laughing and crying together in this special space outside their families.

A. Women's Fellowship as an Agency of Empowering

Women who are brought into the church by Christian women's visiting surely experience women's fellowship as a supportive group in the church. Women married into Christian families also experience growth in participating in women's fellowship. Mrs. Lin Yi is an active member in women's fellowship, who describes her relationship this way:

> Even though I came from a non-Christian family, nearly every close friend of mine is in women's fellowship. This may be because women's honest concern touched me deeply when I first came to the church. Sometimes when I feel upset or frustrated I can talk freely to two or three Christian sisters whom I really trust. They listen eagerly to me and pray for me and never speak to others without my permission. Their concern for others make me want to join them, and I hope I can help someone too.[25]

Another woman is Wu Ling Huey, sixty-four-year old who manages a small business by herself and has four children. She recalled how she was moved by women's support during a crisis of her family:

> I seldom attended Sunday service when I married into my husband's family. Women of the church usually came to see me and invite me to join women's fellowship. I always refused them because I thought I was too busy taking care of my four children. Many years later I lost a child in an accident. I cried every day and I tried to pray but had no answer. Still those church women came

[25]Lin Yi, interview by the author, 6 August 1993.

to see me and pray for me on each day. Then I began to repent of my hard heart. It was they who brought me back to the church.[26]

Women's compassionate love of people in need and generous support are special gifts in women's fellowship. As a member of women's fellowship, one may easily experience Christian (women) sisters' kindly concern and help. Women have long been taught to bear unbearable sufferings with patience. But such endurance shows the strength of women. I am not saying that to be submissive in the forced sacrificial suffering is good, but somehow women turned passive suffering to strength, which gives them the power to endure and eventually to overcome bad situations. A woman shared how she was encouraged by women's power of love and determination:

> I came from a non-Christian family. Due to my husband's kindness and love I tried to accompany him to the church on each Sunday. But it was hard to devote myself to Christianity. It felt hard for me to touch God. My husband died four years after we married. I screamed to God, how can God raise me up high and suddenly crush me to the ground? I had no peace, I was only full of hatred. I did not believe in God. But God opened a door for me. God sent many respectful Christian sisters to come to see me frequently and share their life stories. Then I understood that I am not the only one who suffered. There are many disasters in women's life. Those elderly women have experienced different tastes of life. Their wisdom and virtues help me to see my

[26]Wu Ling Huey, interview by the author, 8 August 1993.

weakness and selfishness, especially a woman elder who had suffered ten times more than me yet prayed for me constantly and encouraged me to have faith to help me become strong. I really thank her and those women in women's fellowship, because their love and encouragement helped me to live in a positive way of life.[27]

The fellowship of women in the church provides a network where women encourage and become empowered. As Audre Lorde said, "Interdependency between women is the way to a freedom which allows the I to be, not in order to be used, but in order to be creative."[28] I can see how women are supported and find strength to stand up against painful experiences. Yet, I think that women's fellowship must step further, not stop at surface treatment of hurts. When we encounter women who are hurt by marriage violations, husband's extra-marital affairs, mistreatment between women and so forth, how are we going to face these problems? We must keep asking why it happens to women instead of men? What are the social realities and factors which support these evil doings to women? How can we face these problems and solve them together as a community? Women need to articulate a social analysis of their culture. Women must gain strength from our fellowships and the courage to speak out. Individual woman's situations and family backgrounds are different but we need to learn

[27]Wu Lih Ju, "Neu shiuan yeu woo" (Women's mission and me), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (November 1993): 30.
[28]Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 111.

in solidarity with each other first, before expecting solidarity from male colleagues and churches. As bell hooks said:

> We do not need to share common oppression to fight equally to end oppression. We do not need anti-male sentiments to bond us together, so great is the wealth of experience, culture, and ideas we have to share with one another. We can be sisters united by shared interests and beliefs, united in our appreciation for diversity, united in our struggle to end sexist oppression, united in political solidarity."[29]

B. Women's Fellowship as an Agency of Education

Women like to join women's fellowship because it is a group fully belonging to women that gives them a free space to organize and to plan by themselves. Women's fellowship also plays an important educational function and whether its direction is to keep traditions or not, the educational function should not be neglected. Most early Taiwanese Christian women did not receive good education. This was due to war and severe sexual discrimination. Education is the most important work of women's fellowship of the church. One woman recalled how she joined the women's fellowship and then she became a Christian:

> I lived near a church. I have always envied those Christians singing their hymns. I imagined it was a paradise. Once that church wanted to start a women's group. A woman evangelist came

[29]hooks, From Margin to Center, 65.

to invite women who lived near the church. I do not know why I attended the group. I was a non-Christian at that time. But I enjoyed singing, Bible study and the choir a lot. After that I became an active member of the women's group and was baptized.[30]

Mrs. Shiue Ay told how she received education in women's fellowship:

I came from a poor family and received no school education. When I married into a Christian family, I was afraid to go to the church. Whenever people were singing hymns and reading the Bible I felt like running away. I felt ashamed that I could not read at all. Later the women's fellowship started a class of Romanized Taiwanese to help people to read the Bible. This was a great help to me. I am proud that since then I can read. You know, sometimes my grandchild is amazed that his grandmother can read the English.[31]

Women encourage each other to learn new things and new ideas through the gatherings of women's fellowship. It changes women's life gradually and invisibly. Mrs. Pan Shwu Yuann shared her experience in Neu-shiuan:

I am a very traditional woman. In my judgment, family, husband, and children are the most important. But since I began to attend the women's fellowship, I have learned a lot from other women. This opened my eyes that there are many new things I need to learn.

[30]Chern Jin Ding, "Neu shiuan yeu woo" (Women's mission and me), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (November 1993): 9.

[31]Shiue Ay, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 4 August 1993.

Being a Christian I really need to renew my view of life to live out my faith, and not just be concerned about my own family.[32]

The Women's Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has promoted a series of women's consciousness educational projects since 1990. It suggests a list of topics such as women's health, law and women, women and marriage, women and religion, women and the ecological movement. These suggested topics were designed by the Women's Ministry Committee in the General Assembly Office and given to every Presbytery as a reference list of activities. Because of the lack of women able to join the promoting group, the movement has not yet fully developed in every local church. So, most of the women's fellowships in the local churches are practicing traditional subjects, not "Feminist" consciousness. But women's fellowship is an empowering community for women.

C. The Crisis of Sisterhood

Women usually feel close to each other in a community. Married women especially know very well the heavy burdens typical of women's experiences. These experiences make women connect to each other easily. Most of the women live under the traditional expectations of a patriarchal society. It is hard to dispel the distorted traditional expectations which becomes an unconscious hindrance to women, making women feel conflicted and competitive among themselves. As Chung Hyung Kyung observed in Asian women, she says:

[32]Pan Shwu Yuann, "Neu shiuan yeu woo" (Women's mission and me), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (November 1993): 21.

> While Asian women are angered by the sin of the oppressors, they also acknowledge the sin of the oppressed. This includes internalized self-hate, horizontal violence, and ignorance . . . that (women) lack 'self-confidence' and are 'unwilling to encourage other women to aspire to leadership positions. In many cases they direct their anger of oppression not at the oppressor but at each other . . . (women) have failed to trust ourselves and other women. We have been our own worst enemies.[33]

This kind of competition or jealousy sometimes creates a crisis for women in fellowship.

A woman shared her experience of hurt by another woman, complaining:

> I believe in sisterhood among women but I doubt it as well sometimes. I feel that women are narrow-minded. Sometimes I receive unreasonable criticisms always from women more than from men.[34]

Another woman had a similar experience. She talked about the criticism she received from women, who told her that she should take care of her own family rather than doing church ministry. A woman said to her, "There are lots of men in the church; why are you, a woman, involved so much? It is no good for a Christian woman to be too strong."[35]

[33]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 40-1.
[34]Yeh Meei Jyh, "Fuh neu yeu liing dao" (Women and leadership), Neu-shiuan No. 248 (March 1987): 3.
[35]Ibid., 2.

Women who discourage other women from having greater involvement in church ministry are not many. This is because women are more faithful than men. Women's conflicts, however are due to the different value judgments and viewpoints between women of the older and the younger generation. The tension between women is sometimes caused by women who are not honest about presenting their true points of view, allowing misunderstandings to happen. A chairperson of a Women's Community described this experience:

> When I was first elected as chairperson in the Presbytery, I made a mistake. During the election of committee members there was one elected member who refused to take the position. Her reason was that she cannot read and write. I thought that she meant it, so we elected a new member. But then this sister said she was hurt by my decision. We have had some unpleasant feeling since that time. I am very sorry for that.[36]

Different barriers divide women. We must take note that,

> as women, we have been taught to ignore our differences, or view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.[37]

[36]Shieh shwu Yuh, "Shuh suann juu de en dean" (Counting of the Lord's grace), Neu-shiuan No. 240 (November 1985): 8.
[37]Lorde, Sister Outsider, 112.

Much depends on how we define our community and make our differences into strengths.

III. Limitations to Women's Full Participation

Traditional Taiwanese women are educated to believe that the most beautiful virtue of being a woman is to put the family life (husband, children and parents-in-law) in the center of her own life. Women who want to participate more and contribute to the church, or have more space of their own, usually do not find it easy. Besides this, women are also hindered by their own lack of self-confidence. Limitations to women's participation of church ministry include:

A. Obstructions From the Family

Heavy burdens for a married woman usually come from her family. Younger women who are raising children often have difficulty in giving up their responsibilities at home to participate in women's ministry. Therefore, women's fellowship groups of the church are comprised of women between the age of 40 and 60. The majority of the women are above 50. Since older women decide the direction of women's gatherings, younger married women are not interested in attending the women's fellowship. Women's fellowship does not serve the interests of women in different life stages. A more difficult burden for women to bear is obstruction from their husbands. It is a long struggle for women. A daughter describes the life story of her mother:

> My mother has suffered for so many years. In order to serve the Lord, she bears many heavy burdens. Satan is very tricky and

used my father who was a gentle person to attack my mother. Every night my father would shout at my mother without any reason. Whenever my mother attended women's activities such as choir, dancing, or committee meetings in the church, my father always pulled her away like pulling a dog in front of the public. This happened again and again. Each time if my mother was going to attend activities sponsored by church district, Presbytery or Women's Ministry Committee General Assembly, my mother would hide her baggage in someone's house. Otherwise my father would show his severe resentment and would not allow my mother to leave. Living under such a situation, my mother never said a word. She would stay in an empty room to pray the whole night for my father. As the Bible has written in the Gospel of Luke, one " ought always to pray and not lose heart" (18:1). My mother never complained about my father's wrong doings. She considered it a training for her faith.[38]

Women have long been taught that submission to her husband is the virtue of women. Even the Christian church highly respects women's sacrificial love for her family members, but does not teach how to love herself. A man who batters his wife and does not take care of his family is easily forgiven. People have pity on him, because he is helpless, controlled by the devil, rather than blaming him for his wrong doings. If women want to have greater involvement in the church's ministry, there must be education for Christian men about how

[38]Tzng Shing tzyy, "Kaw juu der sheng de Muu chin" (Mother who gets victorys by the Lord), Neu-shiuan No. 243 (May 1986): 45.

to be good supporters of their wives and families. A woman I interviewed said: "Whether women participate in church activities enthusiastically or not depends on men. Men need to be educated."[39] Another woman shared her experience and said:

> Since I attend women's fellowship I grow a lot and I want to learn more and do more service for the church. But usually it is my husband who will be unhappy about my enthusiastic involvement. He always says to me that there are many capable persons to work for church ministry. It is harmless without my presence. And he always says that being a woman is to be a good wife taking care of the family. That is all be expects. . . . Sometimes I am up-set that my major obstruction is my husband.[40]

In order to enable greater involvement of women and to create an equal partnership, for both women and men, education is necessary and urgent. There is a saying that, "Equality in society must first mean equality in marriage."[41] How can women as a community respond to this? How far can both men and women face the challenge of it? What strategies can we use to improve the crippled situation in front of us? These are really the problems facing Christians today.

[39]Mrs. Chern Lin Lin, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 30 July 1993.
[40]Lay Meei Chian, interview by the author, 4 August 1993.
[41]Shirley Lee, ed., The Role of Women, (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 23.

B. Limitations from Women Themselves

Women's difficulty in achieving full participation in church ministry is also due to the way women limit themselves. Women must reflect on the following aspects.

Women often lack self-awareness and self-confidence. This is a very common phenomenon for the majority of Christian women. When the women's fellowship elects new executive members, many women decline to be elected. The reason is that the majority of women are self-conscious and lack self-confidence. Most women easily see the weaknesses in themselves and are afraid to take on new responsibilities and face new challenges. It can easily be seen in women who are elected as committee members for the first time. Sometimes women elected by church members to be deaconess, do not accept the position because they think of themselves as unqualified. A woman may also be afraid to hurt her husband's feelings if he is not the one elected. Women think that to respect their husbands means not to ride or advance over him. They prefer to have their husbands elected while they help behind the scenes. When I interview women concerning these unequal elections, many women say that they would rather respect their husbands and let them show off. Mrs. Chern Shiau Lian explains:

I think it is good to let men have more participation than women, because women's family burdens are heavy and it is too hard to do

something else for the church. Besides, men speak out more than women. I would prefer my husband to be elected instead of me.[42]

Women's lack of self-awareness leads them to think that men are always better than women. Women's lack of self-confidence leads them to see only their own weaknesses instead of recognizing their capabilities. They always think of themselves as not qualified. However, what is the standard of qualification? Who sets the standard? It seems that women have developed psychological limitations as a result of the patriarchal society.

Women are not only hindered by traditional bondages and stereotypical women's roles, they suffer from psychological limitations as a result of the lack of self-consciousness and self-confidence. Women who live in a patriarchal society are taught to be submissive to men. Without sufficient education and special leadership training, it is really hard for ordinary women to play leadership roles in church life. A woman elder addressed this problem:

> Women's subordinate position is due to the male-dominated society and traditional education, which hardly encourage women to develop self-consciousness, and to go beyond oneself to strive for freedom and independent life. More importantly women are easily satisfied in their contemporary situation, without much self-expectation. . . . The importance of continuous education cannot be neglected.[43]

[42]Mrs. Chern Shiau Lian, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, June 28 1993.
[43]Jang Lih Shwu, "Fuh neu yeu jinn shiou" (Women and education), Neu-shiuan No. 243 (May 1986): 8.

Women who want to motivate other women to learn new things frequently write articles which are published in Neu-shiuan advocating that women should try to find ways to continue to learn and educate themselves. A woman writes:

> For Christians, the ultimate purpose of education is to connect our lives with that of Jesus and continue growing. . . . Educating oneself is to serve God's will and to find out varieties of ministry of the time.[44]

There are many women who express the need for opportunities for further education. Among women I interviewed nearly all of them feel badly about their lack of education. Many of them said that if they could return to their youth, they would try harder to get a better education. But since that is impossible, it is important to search ways for educating oneself.

It is the task of the Women's Ministry Committee in the General Assembly Office and also of the women's fellowship in local churches to develop clear goals, directions and practical steps to equip women more sufficiently through promoting women's consciousness and leadership training. Women's lack of sufficient education for leadership is a problem for the global church. As Mercy Amba Oduyoye observed,

> The psychological and practical consequences of illiteracy, and the general lower level of women's formal education are on the Decade agenda. The low percentage of women holding political

[44]Guo Jy Huey, "Tzyh shiou" (Self education), Neu-shiuan No. 243 (May 1986): 3.

offices is comparable to that of women in ecclesiastical offices. Apart from cultural factors, both have roots in the lack of education appropriate to the offices. Women in many parts of the world have internalized their state of "sub-ordination," and are living uncomplainingly with low self-esteem, and in silence, apathy, and with servile attitudes to men and to the structures of church and society.[45]

Women's consciousness raising in the Taiwanese Christian setting must aim at both the grass roots leadership and leaders at large in the church. On the one hand there is a need for more women leaders who can direct and conduct educational programs in each Presbytery. On the other hand, there must be a grassroots women's movement for the promotion of women's consciousness and movement towards structural changes in society. Men must participate in this process as well.

[45]Oduyoye, Who Will Roll the Stone Away?, 64.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE AND CHURCH MINISTRY

Women have always been enthusiastic participants in the church's ministry. Their experiences in the ministry and their life stories have seldom been the concern of the church. When women's experiences and stories have not been reflected in the church, then important issues pertaining to women have not been available to keep the church and men within the church learning about past injustices and creating new paradigms for future ministry. In this chapter, I will review and examine experiences and images that women hold of themselves. I will also look at how the church's ministry for women has been worked out and how it should bring forth changes.

I. Examination of Women's Self-Esteem and Self-Expectation[1]

Women actively participate in church ministry in many ways. They are the pastors most reliable colleagues in the local church, they play important roles as lay ministers. Women do a great deal of work in the church and they are important in the church's ministry. They also receive much enjoyment from their ministry. Although women acknowledge their importance in the church's ministry and in their families, these roles do not necessarily provide them with a sense of high self-esteem and self-expectation of themselves. It is quite an interesting phenomenon that women's awareness of the achievement of

[1]Self-expectation is the translation of Chinese "Tzyh woo chyi day", which means women's expectation of themselves.

women is not equivalent to women's own self-esteem. Here are some examples of how women see themselves, their self-esteem and self-expectations.

A. Common Problems of Women's Self-Esteem

Traditional education teaches women to be good and obedient to someone (such as parents, teachers, elder brothers/sisters, husband, and others who are considered higher in authority or older than them). To be a good mother is to sacrifice yourself for family and children. Asking women to describe how they see themselves or to name good qualities and characteristics about themselves which make them feel confident or proud is difficult for women. Some women speak frankly, saying that they do not want to think of themselves too much because they do not want to be a selfish person. Wu Shi Er, a forty-six year old housewife with a college education and three children, responded:

> I consider living for others especially for my family and my children, most important. I have attended a few private classes for women's self-help and growth and it makes me wonder why all this talk about women's "self?" I felt it is too much for women to think about themselves. It is better to talk more about children's education. Because I think it is more important.[2]

This woman is an example of many women's attitudes about themselves. They do not consider themselves a whole person who can love themselves and continually push themselves to grow. Development and success for

[2] Wu Shi Er, interview by the author, Tainan, Taiwan, 11 August 1993.

their husbands and children is far more important than developing their own interests. Carol Gilligan observes that women are over burdened by the concepts of obligation and sacrifice, and cannot think of themselves with a sense of equality.[3] Horng Yuh, a fifty-two year old house-wife with two sons, described her feelings of nervousness and guilt when she loves herself too much. She said:

> I feel that every woman has a bad habit that is concerning too much of thinking about herself and her outward appearance too much. I am also one of them. I found that I enjoy looking for and buying beautiful clothes whenever I go to the market. Though I usually spend my own pocket money on clothes, yet I dare no t tell the truth to my husband. If he ever asked then I would tell that I paid half the price. I dislike telling lies but I cannot stop myself buying clothes.[4]

This woman feels that she cannot stop herself from buying clothes and she dislikes telling her husband the real price of the clothes so that he feels "safe" that she does not spend money easily. This seems to be a common phenomenon among many women who spend money in secret to avoid their husbands' control. Housewives who do not earn money from working outside of their home are especially cautious in spending money on themselves, for they feel that they do not own their economic power and they are dependent on their husbands who make them feel guilty when they spend money on themselves. They feel better not

[3]Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 64.
[4] Horng Yuh, interview by the author, 12 August 1993.

letting their husbands know how they spend money in the household. A little bit of cheating is alright as long as they efficiently manage the household money. The woman above does not wish to hurt her husband's feelings, nor does she want to be hurt; therefore, a little bit of dishonesty is the way to avoid this conflict. She feels this dilemma when she thinks that she has been working hard for her family, so why can't she enjoy herself? And why does this cause her to feel guilty? She said that she does not understand herself.

The problem of how women find it hard to know and to describe their "self" is discussed in a book entitled Women and Self-Esteem:

> Some women lack self-esteem because they lack sufficient knowledge of who they are, and thus feel they have no true self to like and value. Although in an ideal world everyone would reach mid-life with a pretty clear ideal of who she is and what she's about, in our world women traditionally have not been encouraged to "know thyself" as men have been admonished to do, and women historically have been denied the opportunities for self-discovery that many men take for granted. As a result, many women . . . had great difficulty describing themselves at all.[5]

It is surprising to find that among the twenty women I interviewed, not one of them felt satisfied with herself, with the exception of their roles as mothers and wives. There seem to be invisible standards hanging over them which are impossible to reach. What is their standard of being "good" and able to "qualify?" Where does this

[5] Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan, Women and Self-Esteem (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 12.

idea of goodness come from? These women have difficulty answering these questions. This may be traced to traditional expectations of womanhood. Moreover, it is from their minds, their imagination and their expectations where they hold ideas of being a good mother, a good wife, a good daughter-in-law, a good woman, etc. These ideas make them feel that they can never fulfill their complex roles. Women who are satisfied with their lives and families still cannot feel satisfied with themselves. Mrs. Lin Meei said:

> Generally speaking I think I am happy with having a good husband and lovely children. I enjoy my work as a teacher. But I never feel satisfied about myself because there is too much to learn in order to be successful. I dare not say that I have any importance because I am a simple woman. Maybe I am important to my husband and children, that is all.[6]

Women know their talents and special gifts but still, knowing these never helps them feel good enough, for there is always some demand placed on them which leads to disappointment. Most of these women know their limitations at being a wife and mother. They work hard in caring for their family, yet they never fulfill their own expectations. Mrs. Lin Lih Lih said:

> I think I am an active person and good in personal relationships. Before my illness I am the one who took charge of asking for the repayment of a loan. My husband dared not do this by himself. I am also a very good cook. Single handedly I can prepare food for

[6] Lin Meei, interview by the author, 13 June 1993.

more than forty persons. But these are no use. I seldom feel happy about myself.[7]

Women in this situation commonly describe themselves as wives and mothers. They are kind, caring and unselfish people. They see themselves as "good women" yet they do not feel good about themselves. It seems ironic for women to work hard to reach the standard of being a "good woman" but their concept of a "good woman" does not seem important at all. In other words, women usually think that any one can be good enough except themselves. Many women do not have a balanced view of themselves. One or two weak points becomes the reference point and judge of their entire worth. Most women cannot value themselves in a positive way. They tend to live comparing themselves to someone else.

Usually women are not satisfied with themselves and have a lower self-esteem than men. Women judge their own self-esteem and self-value based on their role in society and their relationships with others. Women feel more confidence, and feel approval and acceptance when they have fulfilled society's roles and have good relationships with family and relatives. During the interview I found that many women feel upset by not being "successful mothers". I asked what they meant by "successful" mother? They tend to base their value of being a good and successful mother on the achievement of their children. If their children have good grades in school and have the opportunity for higher education then they are responsible, good mothers. Being good

[7] Lin Lih Lih, interview by the author, 19 August 1993.

mothers and wives seemed difficult for women at least according to their own judgment. Many felt they hardly met the standards of their husbands. Besides that, the failure of women to reach their own and other's expectations of being a person capable of taking care of others causes them individual feelings of disappointment and self-abandonment. Mrs. Chern Shiau Lian said:

> It's most difficult for me as a woman to play different roles as daughter-in-law, wife and mother. I think being a mother is the hardest one. I was not healthy when I was young, so all of my children have inherited a weak body from me. Whenever I look back at how I have tried hard to raise these children I cry. I always worry if any of my children get sick that it is my fault. I hate myself to be like a sick cat.[8]

Mrs. Lay Meei Chian also addressed her difficult situation about being a mother of three children:

> My husband is not too bad to me and my parents-in-law are open minded persons. The only thing which makes me feel frustrated is I cannot educate my elder son whose personality is so rebellious. He has stolen things from me and our neighbors. I have tried to persuade him not to steal again. I also try to be good to him. But whether I treated him good or bad he does not change at all. I feel ashamed of being a mother who has totally failed in raising her children, although my two younger ones are better. Sometimes

[8] Chern Shiau Lian, interview by the author, 28 June 1993.

I feel like committing suicide to warn my son. I feel that I am useless.[9]

Mrs. Yeh Liang shared her feeling of being useless in her family:

Since I became ill I feel that have I lost so much. Except spending lots of money on medicine. My husband thinks that I am useless. I lose my temper when I talk to him. So many times I wonder why God made me this way? Maybe death is easier for me. There is no place in my family for being a sick person. Thank God that our Christian sisters still care about me. Otherwise, my life would be too hard. Whenever I think of my life of being a woman I feel sad, angry and hated. But I ask God never to leave me.[10]

Women value themselves when they are capable of taking care of others or feel useful when contributing to their families. Women's moral idea is related to family life and is not based on interdependence or cooperation but rather upon the fulfillment of their obligation of being women to give to others without taking anything for themselves. Once they have lost the power of properly carrying out their duties of being mothers or wives, then their self-esteem nearly breaks down. Theories of psychology say this is due to the differences between the ego development of men and women. Carol Gilligan observes: that "Women have different organizing principles around which their psyches are structured. One of these principles is that they exist to serve

[9] Lay Meei Chian, interview by the author, 10 August 1993.
[10] Yeh Liang, interview by the author, 14 July 1993.

other people's needs."[11] She continues, "women are taught that their main goal in life is to serve others - first men, and later, children,"[12] once they are incapable of caring for others or cannot reach that abstract standard set for them, then they feel helpless and upset. Yet, "This prescription leads to enormous problems, for it is supposed to be carried out as if women did not have needs of their own, as if one could serve others, without simultaneously attending to one's own interests and desires."[13] Women need to learn how to break these false assumptions and learn how to live not just for others but for themselves as well.

An interesting (though impossible) question raised to these women is, "If you could be reincarnated, would you choose to be a woman or a man?" Fifteen respondents out of twenty would choose to be a man. One of them said either sex will be alright with her. Four of them would want to be a woman again. Their responses reflect the privileges they see in being a man.

Women gave the following reasons for believing that being a man is better than being a woman: the head of the family, can control others, do not need to "look at husband's face" (one sign of control is the husband's facial expression of his mood), have more space for development, enjoy more achievements in business, no childbirth pain, no need to bother with housework, do not worry about menstruation, no fear of sexual violence, one can act freely to do as one wills, have

[11]Gilligan, In a Different Voice, 61.
[12]Ibid.
[13]Ibid.

more rights of self-determination, enjoy being naked in hot summer, have power in financial control, enjoy the service of wife etc. These responses reflect how women believe that they cannot live freely, and according to their own will.

Two of the women who responded that they would rather be women insist that they enjoy being women. They both enjoy wearing beautiful clothes and high heels, and are interested in flower arrangement. Both of them are currently experiencing trouble in their present marriages. They said that if they could re-live their life, they would choose to be single. They think that women have a better sense of beauty and life which is important to them. However, to be someone's wife is like living in a prison, i.e., a woman can hardly control her own life. Therefore, to be a single woman is a wonderful way to enjoy oneself and manage their lives in a better way.

The other two women who would remain women said that men have many responsibilities in maintaining a family, and these burdens are hard to bear. The two women who enjoy being women are from economically privileged families, their husbands are both medical doctors, and they receive more respect from their husbands. Their good economic background has enabled them to hire a housekeeper to do housework for them.

The one who said either sex role would be the same for her suggests that she thinks both sexes have different burdens in life, and as long as one takes the responsibility, that would be fine.

Women's response to being a woman again or being a man is connected to their family and social class background (here I refer to their financial situation and professional work). Most of the interviewees were middle class women whose lives are steady; yet men have more power and are usually in control of the household. Women are usually willing to serve their families; yet if possible they desire more space for themselves. Women from the upper-middle class families enjoy their husbands achievements and have an easy life compared to the majority of other women. Although their husbands still have power over them, yet due to their financial background they can have more space and financial freedom and do not need to worry about life's burdens. Therefore they want to remain in the situation.

Society places so many traditional expectations on women that they feel it is hard to breathe. Women feel more self-worth when they have the ability and power to take care of others. Otherwise they easily feel useless. Women tend to think that their main responsibility and reason for existing is simply for others, not for themselves. This is very similar to Carol Gilligan's findings about women's identity, which "is defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care".[14] To please others is much more important than to please oneself. This makes many women feel that it is hard to freely enjoy their lives. Yet, what is the standard for women's responsibility and care? It is really hard to judge.

[14]Ibid., 160.

Although these middle-age Taiwanese Christian women present a seemingly traditional picture of Taiwanese women. Taiwan nowadays is in a process of rapid economic development, there are many active secular women's movements promoting women's rights. They may bring forth a promising future of women's liberation. We should also not overlook that Taiwanese women of the younger generation may be different from women of Christian fellowship. Christian women should not neglect and isolate themselves from women's movements in Taiwan.

B. Women's Self-Expectation

Since women are educated to believe that being "good" is to make sacrifices for others, and that women's virtue is not to be selfish, it is hard for women to have a positive self-expectation of their own way of life. When I asked them the question about their plans for the future or what they will do after they retire, many of them answered "I have not thought about it yet." For those housewives, the question is, how will they change their lives, is there a possibility of change? Do they think they need to change in any aspect, either their self image or way of life? They think that they cannot fully control their lives by themselves. Something else always seems to influence their plans and ideas. Because of that lack of control, they think it would be better to wait and see, or to simply live their lives day by day, instead of planning ahead. I encouraged them to feel free to imagine what they would really feel like doing for themselves. I told them not to worry about whether it would be possible or not. Still,

many of them found it hard to answer. Some of them did answer, though still they were concerned about their not being good enough according to their own wishes. But then I asked them, if their lives could be lived over again, what changes would there be or how would they begin again? This question helped them think differently.

When they recalled their past, many of the women thought, if life could be re-lived, they would change their attitude in more positive ways towards their own interests, they would develop their own talents, instead of being submissive and unable to see their own needs. Many of these women were especially concerned that if they had better educations when young, their lives might have been different.

Mrs. Hwang Jin Shing said:

> If I can be young again, I would study hard to have better education. I would do many things that I really dream of. Because, since I was a child, my parents always told me that we are not rich, do not ask to own toys for yourself, do not ask to study at high school, do not do so and so for we cannot afford it. I had too many fears and concerns which made me feel bondages. After I married, I had to accept what my husband planned for me, even when to have a child and how many we should have. He does not allow me to work outside the home. I can only try to enjoy what I have. But it would be different if I could be young again.[15]

[15] Hwang Jin Shing, interview by the author, 4 June 1993.

Mrs. Lin Lih Lih said:

> I had my own profession as a hair dresser when I was a girl. But my husband asked me to help him with the machinery, which later broke my left arm in two, and made me become a disabled person. He often shouted to me and beat me sometimes. I can only endure his behavior quietly, not to cause other troubles. If I could re-live my life, I would go to school, maybe to study theology. I feel angry that my mother would not allow me to have a better education just because I was a female. And I would not marry this man which was chosen by my father.[16]

Women are not encouraged to see themselves as independent persons who could live their lives and be concerned about others at the same time. They feel regret, because in their early lives, they were not encouraged to see women's lives differently. Most of them feel helpless in changing anything except themselves, they want to accept the dignity of being women and they want to enjoy their limited space and freedom. All about their imagination of changing life is built around the assumption, that life can be re-lived again, yet, since it is an impossible assumption, their dreams seem too far to catch. Only a few of them feel satisfied with their lives and would like to keep things the same. Those satisfied with their lives are the privileged women who are small in number. From witnessing these women, I can see how Taiwanese Christian women have been hampered by life's cruel reality, and I can see how it is hard to find the motivation and

[16] Lin Lih Lih, interview by the author, 19 August 1993.

strength to face the challenge of change. There are of course, women whose eyes have been opened to see the wider world and the new possibilities of life after middle-age. Yet, these women are a few, and, in some ways, they are from economically better and progressive thinking families. There is a woman who describes her feelings in Neu-shiuan:

> In the old days, I loved others and was concerned for others. Now, when I grow old, I began to think of myself. I found out that I have some talents. I should contribute my talents to society and, also, for myself to have a meaningful life. I want to jump up and shout happily that I have my own sky, I have my own world. I found myself finally.[17]

I am curious about this woman's change. What made her discover herself and her talents in her old age? What changes in herself does she refer to? Or are they just in her own imagination?

Women's self-esteem relies so much on the feelings of others. Self fulfillment is tied to the expectation that they will care for others even outside the family. Women, though taught to be concerned first with their own family, once they think they can live more freely for themselves often associate this freedom with caring for the wider society. Many women speak of their hope to volunteer as workers in hospitals, or in some other social institution in need. Many of them think that to have a meaningful life is to give your life for others. Taiwanese Christian women still seem to find it too hard to step out

[17] Lin Jeng Tzy, "Woo yeou woo de tian kong" (I have my own sky), Neu-shiuan No. 288 (Nov 1993): 54.

of traditional roles that dictate being good to others and being selfless. Many are resigning themselves to their destiny of being women. I think this is both a virtue and a limitation of Taiwanese Christian women.

II. Women's Experience and Women's Ministry

Women's experiences vary according to family background and growing processes. It is impossible to address women's experiences as a uniform voice. As Third World woman theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye said, "Women should not be expected to speak with one voice. The diversity we are dealing with ought to be fully recognized."[18] I do see that there are different responses and voices of women. Yet, I can also see the common bonds and limitations of being women. How can the women's ministry in the church see the need of women to be empowered, and the need to base their ministry on women's experiences, and the need to strategize and to support women in the church.

Women's ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is based on the women's fellowship in each local church. Each local women's fellowship is independent, with its own financial budget and they each have their own particular interest and direction in ministry. Most of women's ministry is focused on family visiting, Bible study, women's choir, and other activities depending upon members and church's needs. Though the Women's Ministry Committee of the Assembly Office has

[18]Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Reflections from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's Experience and Liberation Theologies" in Feminist Theology From the Third World, ed. Ursula King, 29.

suggested a series of topics related to women's consciousness education to each Presbytery since 1990, I have found that there are some problems with its educational policy. Part of the problem is due to the lack of resource people who can execute the program on the Presbytery level and who can do outreach to local churches. The other problem is that though each gathering at the Presbytery level is well attended by large members of women, after the resource person gives the speech, sufficient time and space is not provided for communication between the speaker and the audience. Besides that, this model of traditional one way education does not stimulate women's passion for participation, and does not help women respect their own experiences and their own contributions. I find this kind of education makes it hard to model new processes of dialogue and communication. It does not help the voiceless mass name and change their views together with other women. Women's education should be guided by the General Office and there should be big gatherings at the Presbytery level; but the Presbytery should also encourage local women's communities to create more safe spaces for women to talk about their experiences at home, in the church, and in the larger society. The Presbytery should also try to strategize with the local base on policies that effect women's ministry.

A. Women's Experiences and Education

Though Women's Community in the local church has supplied a space for women's needs, women also find good support in the community. But

women seldom have a chance to share their common problems and suffering and to explore how these can be empowering. In the traditional way, women tend to listen to speakers who are invited to come. They listen to these professional people, taking what they say as authority and seldom raise questions. Women are not encouraged to speak out in public because of the ideology of "Jia choou buh way yang" which means that domestic scandals should not be publicized. Women dare not speak out about their oppression and suffering. Usually what women will do is complain to a few intimate female friends and pretend nothing has happened to them. This kind of private complaining and sharing cannot help women face the reality of the problem as a collective power. Women need to break the taboo of speaking of their pain. In this way the women's fellowship becomes a place of self-help and self-education among women. Once women dare to share in community, then they will know that they are not suffering alone and they may gather enough collective strength to change gradually.

I suggest that sharing women's experiences and life stories is fundamental for women's education in women's ministry. Personally I am very moved by what Carol P. Christ says:

> Women's stories have not been told. And without stories there is no articulation of experience. Without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make the important decisions of her life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strengths, to comprehend her pain. Without stories she cannot understand

herself. Without stories she is alienated from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or religious. She is closed in silence. The expression of women's spiritual quest is integrally related to the telling of women's stories. If women's stories are not told, the depth of women's souls will not be known.[19]

In my own experience, I know I was empowered through stories shared among women. When I share my own story, and receive encouragement from other women, I feel my wounds healed. And when listening to other women's stories, I am empowered by their wisdom and strength. Through sharing women's stories, I see the sacred dimension and power of women's lives.

The book Women's Ways of Knowing, addresses how women come to know themselves as subject when women hear from others and listen to their own inner voice as well. The author said:

Our reading of the women's stories leads us to conclude that as a woman becomes more aware of the existence of inner sources for knowing and valuing, as she begins to listen to the "still small voice" within her, she finds an inner source of strength.[20]

Women need to be encouraged to speak out of their experiences, their pain, their feelings and their hope, in order to find their real selves. Women's education must be related to women's experience. Women must find their own words to make meaning of their experiences and this will take time. When women continue sharing and listening to

[19]Christ, Diving Deep and Surfacing, 1.
[20]Belenky et al., Women's Ways of Knowing, 54.

women's experiences, the stories will "help the women translate their ideas from the darkness of private experience into a shared public language".[21] Only when women know their problems and reality better, will they discover a vision for the future, create a collective voice and have the courage to change women's destiny. Basically, women must hear their own voices, discover their reality and the difficulties of being women in a man's society. Then they will be motivated to change, and to take steps to receive sufficient education that will empower them to take action. Women's education need not necessarily come from school programs but may arise out of a commitment to create a sisterhood community, where women can get themselves together, begin to understand, and thus begin to overcome their common oppressions. In these communities women can begin to act out their new sense of wholeness, making their own decisions for their own lives.[22] As bell hooks said, "Education as the practice of freedom,"[23] in the feminist movement must encourage women to accept the challenge of education and help women to think systematically about the world, to raise questions about the way things are, and how we can bring forth a new world view.

B. Role Model for the Next Generation

Through the interviews with women, I see that there are few role models for revisioning women's lives away from traditional definitions.

[21]Ibid., 203.
[22]Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., Womanspirit Rising (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 201-2.
[23]hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, 115.

Women who live in a sexist society and culture have long been taught that:

> A woman's predominant role in life is to be man's helpmate, to cook and work for him without being paid, to bear and rear his children, and to guarantee him psychological and sexual satisfaction. Woman's place is in the home, whereas man's place is in the world earning money, running the state, schools, and churches.[24]

No wonder most of the women have low self-esteem and feel disillusioned about their self-expectation. The women I interviewed seldom thought about what they could do for themselves and how they could really live their lives differently. Because they were taught to be docile, they followed their mothers examples and lived according to traditional roles. Their mothers had little sense of their own minds and voices and were unable to teach their daughters (children) to live non-traditional lives.

> When mothers are powerless, their daughters are inevitably alienated from them . . . . Too many girls learn by observation that oppression is their destiny and that to love a man is to be enslaved. If daughters are to be protected, they must learn from their mother's example that they have the ability to fight and the right to defend themselves. When daughters see

[24]Elisabeth Shüssler Fiorenza, Discipleship of Equals (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 56.

in their mothers an image of dignity and self-respect, they can more easily find in themselves the courage to resist abuse.[25]

Thus the mothers' modelling plays an important role in a daughter's development. If women do not see the oppression under which they live and do not resist this oppression, then the oppression will certainly be continued into the next generation. Womanist theologian Frances E. Wood suggests that in patriarchal ideology "the assaults which women and girls experience in their homes are seen as normative . . . the abuse is perceived as what women and girls should expect as the result of being female"[26] which place women as victims of their own destiny. Women must resist this false assumption as being their destiny.

Women's ministry in education needs to draw attention to the importance of women being role models for future generations, girls and boys alike. Education must teach people of all ages that women require respectful human and equal lives.

Writing about a woman, Ms. Yang Shining Shiang said:

Every woman is a special creation created by God. I always feel proud of being a woman. I believe only trust in God can have happiness. I read a book that talked about men who desert women's lives. If you rely too much on men, you cannot be a happy woman.

[25]Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman, "Father-Daughter Incest" in Violence Against Women: The Bloody Footprints, eds., Pauline B. Bart and Eileen Geil Moran (London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1993), 55.

[26]Frances E. Wood, "Take My Yoke Upon You" in A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil & Suffering, ed., Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 40.

> Women should learn to grow, to think and act independently. Only two independent person can create mutual relationship.[27]

Taiwanese Christian women need to learn to love themselves as well as others. They must learn to appreciate their talents and develop meaningful lives. Christian women must present women's experiences and articulate these experiences in such a way that there will emerge a women's understanding of Christian faith and God's intention for the human community. Women should open their eyes to see their own power which goes beyond anger to a positive creative force for constructing a new future. A new understanding will create new models for women and men.

C. Building Better Partnership

The relationship between women and men has long been defined in the patriarchal system by women's service to others, with men receiving services from women. Most women work hard to serve others, yet their service to others is taken for granted, without reciprocity. From women's stories which I have collected and presented in previous chapters, I can see that women are mourning as a result of their suffering, and their mistreatment. Women as human beings, created in God's image, are yearning for full humanity. They are demanding justice and equal partnership with men. Women are not the only ones who should be held responsible in giving care to others. Women need

[27]Yang Shiang Shiang, "Tzuoh geh kuay leh de neu ren" (Be a happy woman), Neu-shiuan No. 242 (March 1986): 43.

interdependence, harmony, and mutual growth in human community. A woman described her wish for equal partnership in Neu-shiuan:

> I really wish that human beings, whether male or female can become partners. To love and to work together as real stewardship. Not male elders and deacons as the main body of decision making and female elders and deaconess executing men's decision. Not always father reading the newspaper leisurely in the early morning, with mother busy cleaning the house and preparing breakfast and other housework.
>
> Christians in the church must first recognize and respect women's dignity, then we can create a new tradition of partnership in the family, church and society. Respect for women's dignity must be taught in the church.[28]

Talking about the partnership in the Christian church, I think that women's voices need to be heard respectfully. Men usually do not pay attention to what women are saying or they consider women's voices as a minority voice from some rebellious women. Men still tend to think that movements, if not led by men, will not succeed, simply because men are more capable and have more power than women. A male pastor speaks boldly:

> Chinese (Taiwanese) society is still a men's society. Though the women's movement has been going for some twenty, thirty years in human's history, it still cannot solve the problem. It is because this movement is started by women asking for equality

[28]Lin Woan Sheng, "Torng gong torng huoo" (Partnership and Stewardship), Neu-shiuan No. 260 (March 1989): 36.

between men and women, so it hardly gets credit. I think it should be started by men. I am willing to be the one to advocate for the women's movement and respect for women. Otherwise, they maybe have to wait for another two hundred years.[29]

Though he tried to show his encouragement or good will toward the women's movement, this pastor's patriarchal attitude is still strong. Women know so clearly that even though a few men and male pastors recognize the necessity for equality between women and men, this equality is only accepted as an idea or principle, and they are not willing to cooperate in daily practice. Besides, when men try to take leadership in the women's movement, this is problematic.

As Letty M. Russell says:

Too often the person in authority decides as teacher, pastor, official that everyone will participate in decision-making as a team. This in itself tries to establish partnership through authoritarian action. Those "made" partners have still to take their own power and to raise their own voices or there is partnership in name only.[30]

Women must allow themselves and their voices to have authority when addressing women's needs to men and to the church. Men should allow women to speak for themselves and respect their viewpoints. "Men who have for centuries been writing and talking to each other in order to

[29]Jeng Lian Der, "Shyr day fuh neu" (Women of new age), Neu-shiuan No. 221 (Oct 1982): 9.

[30]Letty M. Russell, The Future of Partnership (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 148-9.

define God, the world, human community and existence as they saw it"[31] now must hear women's voices, and try to look from a different angle, to enlarge their knowledge of God, the world, human community and existence.

Women are demanding the practice of the partnership of righteousness. Christian men should listen to women, women should not be forced to meet certain requirements or status positions by men, rather women should have free will and choices of our own. Women should not be treated as inferior to men, but as equal and reconciled in Christ. We must not simply believe, we must also practice:

> The good news is that we are reconciled, this means overcoming our differences by having those who have benefited from their power give it up, and having those who have been weak be empowered. This is not always welcome news, but it is clearly what God's New Creation is about.[32]

For women and men to live in partnership means they must search and create new patterns of human community, they must change unjust structures and distorted symbols of hierachy. Men should also learn to share and to bear responsibility in equal parenting. Giving up their male image as masters and authoritarians, they must become partners and fathers. As Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman have said,

> As long as fathers retain their authoritarian role, they cannot take part in the tasks or the rewards of parenthood. They can

[31]Schüssler Fiorenza and Collins, eds., Women - Invisible in Theology and Church, 13.
[32]Letty M. Russell, Growth in Partnership (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), 20.

never know what it means to share a work of love on the basis of equality, or what it means to nurture the life of a new generation. When men no longer "rule" their families, they may learn for the first time what it means to belong to one.[33]

Men really need to understand women's lives. They need to put themselves in women's skin, and then they can talk about partnership with women. A true partnership emerges when each person can experience and can envision the wholeness, equality, mutuality and freedom of the other despite the gender, race and class differences.

[33]Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman, "Father-Daughter Incest" in Violence Against Women: The Bloody Footprints, eds., Pauline B. Bart and Eileen Geil Moran, 56.

CONCLUSION

A CALL FOR CHURCHES TO BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN

In reflecting upon Taiwanese Christian women's experiences in their historical context and current situation, it seems that women's experiences and voices are usually ignored by male-centered history and social systems. Yet, women's active participation in the church and society yearns to capture the attention of the church and human community.

Women from the beginning of the church's establishment have always been faithful in the Christian community. Taiwanese women who have lived under a patriarchal Confucian society have suffered from discrimination in education and in freedom to choose their way of life. When women first encountered Christianity which encouraged them to strive for education, they were excited about the liberating power of Christian faith. Christianity in Taiwan at its early stage of mission gave women the chance to participate in evangelism and in establishing churches in rural areas. But once the church grew bigger, and became more institutionalized, it began to develop a hierarchy which excluded women from the main body of the church.

While it may have appeared that women were powerless in the whole church structure, women exercised their power in different ways. Though women did not have a chance to participate in decision-making, they continued to have power in sustaining and nurturing the church. And they are leaven in the area of church development.

Taiwanese women have long been taught from male-centered theology that it is virtuous to work hard and not to ask for equal rights. Good Christian women should be sacrificial, selfless, and willing to cooperate in order to keep a harmonious church. Women have acceded to all these requirements but they are still not accorded justice in church structures. Women's issues of unequal treatment in family, church, society, and their workplace are never the subjects of concern in Christian communities. Women have suffered under traditional bondages which are supported by a patriarchal church and society. Women have also painfully searched for their identity and release from a sense of low self-esteem.

But today many Taiwanese Christian women no longer allow themselves to be defined by others as outsiders in Taiwanese society and in the Christian church. Women have been awakened by the ecumenical movement in Christian sisterhood. Taiwanese Christian women have decided to risk becoming involved in the global women's movement to right the wrongs of human society. Taiwanese Christian women are women asking the Taiwanese Christian church to be in solidarity with women and to be faithful to the Gospel teaching that-

> You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:27-8)

What progressive women request of the church is not a position in the present oppressive structure, in order to imitate men exercising power over others. These women are requesting to be a part of building a new model of God's household, and "its focus is on those who have been the outsiders, the marginal ones who are able to articulate their hope for new life and dignity."[1]

Taiwanese women invite the churches to be in solidarity with women. Such an invitation calls upon the churches to open their hearts and minds to listen to women's voices and to try to understand women's situations honestly. As Mercy Amba Oduyoye says:

> To ask the entire church to be in solidarity with women is to ask for identification with the hopes and fears women live by and with, in church and society. . . . It is a call for inclusiveness in all aspects of church life.[2]

She continues:

> Women are now calling on the churches to be in solidarity with them as they articulate their perspective on development and as they struggle to develop themselves. . . . It is a question of justice.[3]

The Christian church needs to listen and to appreciate women's articulation of their perspectives on theology. Emerging women's theologies, whether from the West or East, North or South, are beginning with systematic explorations of women's experiences. Women

[1]Letty M. Russell, Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 39.
[2]Oduyoye, Who Will Roll the Stone Away?, 43-4.
[3]Ibid., 51.

try to respond to the Christian faith honestly from their daily life experiences. In so doing they seek to be responsible in the faith community. Judith Plaskow asserts that since there is no "universal experience" and theology cannot simply deal with abstract concepts, then, "women's experience, once brought to expression, precisely in its particularity has the power to direct our attention to previously unexplored aspects of human experience."[4] Feminist theology makes a good contribution in this theological discourse and discovers the history and reality of the other half of humankind, that is "women".

Some feminist theologians also question whether the church is not itself in a sinful situation to the extent that it refuses to call for the liberation of those who are oppressed.[5] The church, as Paul Hanson describes:

> the community of faith in the Bible is the people called. It is the people called from diverse sorts of bondage to freedom, called to a sense of identity founded on a common bond with the God of righteousness and compassion, and called to the twin vocations of worship and participation in the creative, redemptive purpose. . . . directed to the restoration of the whole creation.[6]

For the church as a community and a people called by God to be free from bondage and to work for righteousness and compassion with God, it

[4]Judith Plaskow, Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich (New York: University Press Of America, 1980), 175.
[5]For more detail of different viewpoints of sin see Russell, Church in the Round, 124.
[6]Paul D. Hanson, The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 467.

must continue in a process of reflection and a willingness to change in order to be faithful to God's call. The male-centered church must open its ears and eyes to women's request to end the patriarchal social system so that the opportunity of full humanity might be available to every human being. Patriarchy, as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza says:

> As a male pyramid of graded subordinations and exploitations specifies women's oppression in terms of the class, race, country, or religion of the men to whom we "belong."[7]

In reality, patriarchy not only defines women's position in relation to the men to whom they "belong" and keeps women on the margin, it is also a system and an ideology of domination and subordination which accepts the marginalization of the powerless as a given and tries to rationalize the injustice of the society. The church, as people called by a righteous God, should not permit itself to participate in an unjust system without also recognizing the sin implicit in such as system.

Christian women call upon the church to be in solidarity with them and also with all of the oppressed, downtrodden people. As Letty Russell says:

> When our relationship to God is what matters ultimately, we can dare to live in patterns other than those provided by the customs and traditions of our own culture.[8]

[7]Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Bread not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), xiv.
[8]Letty M. Russell, Household of Freedom (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 40.

Christian churches should not uphold the injustice of tradition and culture as an excuse to avoid the challenges which are emerging in the faith community today. When women questioning equal rights in decision-making receive the answer that "feminist thinking does not fit in our culture," that is the worst response of all.

I want women and men to cooperate in looking at the meaning and possibility of working in true solidarity. There are three questions raised by Carter Hayward which are worth wrestling with in an honest way. They are:

> What should women do on behalf of our own liberation?
>
> What shall men do in solidarity with women's liberation?
>
> How shall we, men and women, sustain a "revolutionary patience" and be serene lovers of the real world in which we live today?[9]

The women's liberation movement and all other kinds of liberation movements need men and women sincerely working together. The human society is composed of both men and women. The women's movement is easily ignored by men because men tend to think it is women's business without acknowledging that men are also part of the human society. Each man and woman must take a stand either on the side of liberation or oppression. To be silent is to take part in oppression. A liberation movement is a people's movement whether it is composed of women or men. When one participates in a liberation struggle one's understanding of oppression is deepened and such an understanding may bring new insights of liberation. I like the poem " Darning a Bed

[9]Carter Heyward, Speaking of Christ: A Lesbian Feminist Voice (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 41.

Sheet" which was written by Park No Hai. He presents one man's repentance from male privilege and begins to see women's liberation as an integral part of the total liberation process.

He writes:

Darning a bed sheet
washing underwear
I beat my shameful breast
Together we came home from the factory
My wife stayed up past midnight
washing dishes, cleaning house
putting everything in order
even the covers of the chili sauce pot
I used to give orders to her
Bring me food
Bring me water
Give me my clothes

With my colleagues
since I joined the labor union
I could look at myself
indulged in being served
in the name of a husband
in the same manner
of the haughty managers tyrannical
I've been taught by the world

that a man gives orders
and a woman obeys them
I was exploiting my wife
a little by little
and I was an honest model worker
Organizing a labor union
I became aware
their praises and prizes
for being a model worker
are only the bell
hung on the tail of a cat
their talks of protection
of workers as family
are only a nice-looking sugar floss

I too was becoming a dictator
in my home
like the merciless pursuers
of profit I hate
who are decked up with
convenient theories
absolute authority
and what's called common sense
deeper became involved
our struggle made me see

I was discharging their rest
in my own daily practice

As much as the workers are not
productive machines of profit
my wife is not my handmaid
Husband and wife are loving friends
of equal stand
whose relationship is founded
on trust, respect
and democratic sharing
Waiting for my wife's return
from her late work
I darn our bed sheet
A painful awareness
comes through
as the needle
goes through my thumb[10]

How I wish this kind of new understanding of oppression and liberation may also happen in Taiwanese Christian churches and between men and women as we are striving for a new independent country. When we declare the injustice of political oppression, can we also begin to see the oppression of men against women?

[10]Chung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 30.

Women and men are both invited to move along in our particular historical stage of seeking new understanding of humanity and the faith community as together we struggle to live anew in God's grace.

If someone dreams alone,
then it remains only a dream
If many dream together
then this is the beginning,
the beginning of a new reality
Dream our Dream.

--Author unknown[11]

[11]Schüssler Fiorenza, Discipleship of Equals, 1.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

I. Social-economic Background:

* Date/Year of Birth * Age * Birth Order

* Education * Place of Residence

* Marital Statues * Children (number, sex and age)

* Occupation: own / husband / father / mother

Do you have paid work now?

Why do you work?

What kind of work and how long have you worked?

How much do you earn?

How do you feel about your work?

How does your work affect your family life? (yourself in health, satisfaction, etc.?)

Would the present work lead to the profession/career path you want?

If you are not working in paid work, would you tell me why and how you feel about it?

Is homemaking your own choice or influenced by others or some circumstances?

How do you spend most of your time?

What are your most satisfying activities or moments?

What is you financial status? Do you have your own accounts, bond or property?

How did you earn those? Do you have any joint accounts . . . with whom?

Did/do you belong to any voluntary organizations, clubs, associations, or other such groups?

Do you have a close friend? Sex, age, religions? Where did you meet?

How often do you meet and how do you spend time together?

II. Religious and Political Issues:

* What were the religions of your father/mother and both sides of grandparents?

What is religion to your spouse and children?

Who talked to you about God during your childhood?

What did they tell you about God?

How are you the same or different from your grandparents and parents in religious matters?

* How long have you been involved in the Christian church? Have you been baptized? When, where, and by whom?

What made you a Christian? or not? Why?

How often did you attend religious services or other religious activities? With whom?

How active have you been and are you in the church?

What official titles and positions did/do you hold? How long?

What do you think some ideal characteristics which ministers, ministers' wives and other church leaders should have?

* What do you think about most kitchen work, Sunday School teaching, child care, and evangelical visitations being done by women while senior elders, senior ministers and chairs of important committees are men in our church?

How and which of these activities do you enjoy most and think are most important?

What did/do you think about women's contribution to the church and presence or absence of reward/recognition for their contribution?

What do you think about women speaking their mind in general church meetings?

Have you spoken up in the church? Why and why not?

Do you think you have any suggestion for the church to help improve women members' positions in the church?

* Was/is the church important to your life?

Did/does your church make your life happier? How and why? (if not, how and why?)

How important was/is your religion in your everyday life?

Do you feel any contradiction between the church's teachings and practice in life situation?

Do you feel any conflict between your employed work, family life and your church?

* Do most of your close relatives and friends have a very similar or a very different religious orientation from your own? Does religious difference influence your relationship with them? (give example) How did/do you feel about it?

* What is your concept of God? How did/do you think about God? When you think about God what is the image that comes to mind? How would you describe or draw a picture of God?

* How do you define your relationship to God?

* Could you describe your idea of God and spiritual feeling, what would these be?

* What do you think about Jesus? About Mary? Who are your favorite religious figures? Do they take care of you? How?

* Whatis your understanding of Trinity God? Are there any differences between God, Jesus and Holy Spirit?

* Do you believe that the first woman - Eve, was made out of the first man, Adam's rib?

* What do you think about the statement that man is the head of woman (1 Corinthians 11:3) ?

* Among the women in the Bible, who is your nearest to an ideal woman and an ideal Christian woman? Which women interest you most? Why?

* Would you explain your ideal of womanhood?

III. Life History Reflections:

* How did you marry? Was it your choice or arranged by whom?

* What do you think about marriage in general and your own experiences of being a daughter-in-law, wife, mother, and grandmother?

* What do you think about premarital relationship, adultery, divorce, and remarriage?

* Do you have any plan for retirement? What would you do in old age? With whom would you like to live?

* How do you make and how well do you think you have made important decisions that have come your way? (When you have decisions to make such as choice of your children's school, children's marriage, purchase of property, choice of employment, with whom do you discuss the problems? Whose opinion influences you most?)

* Whose opinion affects you most about your choice of dress, hairstyle, or make-up, in general and on specific occasions?

* What are your special gifts and talents? How do you develop them? Who appreciates them?

* Are you happy with yourself? What makes your life important? What makes you feel most alive? If you were to die now, what massages would you leave to your daughters? What would you want to do most?

* What is the best thing that you have done or that has happened to you? What is the worst thing that you have done or that has happened to you?

* What accomplishments have you hoped to achieve in your life up to now, what were they and how well do you feel you have done?

* What are the reasons that you have or have not accomplished?

* How close would you say that you have come to being the kind of person that you would like to be?

* What situations/ factors/ persons/ beings do you feel have been the most important in influencing what happens in your life?

* What has your life been like? Are you satisfied with it? What will you do in the future to change it? What would you change if you were to start over?

* If you can re-live again or have another life, what will be the differences with this life?

* Do you have any leisure time activities or how do you relax when you are tired physically and mentally?

* Is there anything you would like to add that you think is important but has not been asked here?

* Do you have any question which I can answer?

------ Thank you for your kindly help
in answering all these questions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beedy, H. D. "Tainan Theological College, Tainan, Formosa." South East Asia Journal of Theology 7:2 (October, 1965): 17.

Belenky, Mary Field et al. Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Brock, Rita Nakashima. Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power. New York: Crossroad, 1988.

Cannon, Katie G. et al. God's Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1985.

Chern, Jin Ding. "Neu shiuan yeu woo." (Women's mission and me) Neu-shiuan no. 288. (November 1993): 8-10.

Chern, Sheng Jeng. "Neu twu de shiunn liann yeu shyh feng." (Training and service of women disciples) Neu-shiuan no. 232 (August 1984): 9-13.

Chern, Shyang Shoei. "Jong gwo sheh huey jye gow yeu tzuu shian chorng bay." (Structures of the Chinese society and ancestor worship) Jong hwa wen huah fuh shing yueh kan (Journal of the renaissance of Chinese culture) vol. 11, no. 6. (May 1990): 33-40.

Christ, Carol P. Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest. 2nd ed., Boston: Beacon Press, 1980.

Christ, Carol P. and Judith Plaskow, eds. Womanspirit Rising. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979.

Chung, Hyun Kyung. Struggle to Be the Sun Again. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.

Daly, Mary. The Church and the Second Sex. 3d ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

Doely, Sarah Bently, ed. Women's Liberation and the Church. New York: Association Press, 1970.

Duh, Jing Jy. "Miann tuey kuu nann - shaang dih shyh yeong yeuan de ma ma." (Face the suffering - God, the eternal mother) Taiwanese Church News, no.2238. 22 January 1995, 6.

Fabella, Virginia. "A Common Methodology for Diverse Christologies?" In With Passion and Compassion, ed., Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 108-117. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Gau, Yuan Yuan. Tair uan gau shan tzwu (Mountain tribes in Taiwan). Taipei, Taiwan: Shiang Tsao Publishing Co., 1977.

Gilligan, Carol. In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Guo, Jy Huey. "Tzyh shiou." (Self education) Neu-shiuan no. 243. (May 1986): 1-5.

Hanson, Paul D. The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986.

Herman, Judith and Lisa Hirschman. "Father-Daughter Incest." In Violence Against Women: The Bloody Footprints, eds., Pauline B. Bart and Eileen Geil Moran, London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1993.

Heyward, Isabel Carter. The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation. New York: University Press of America, 1982.

_____. Speaking of Christ: A Lesbian Feminist Voice. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989.

hooks, bell. Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. Boston: South End Press, 1984.

Hwang, Bor Her. Ben shiang chu tour tian de tzyy min (The people struggle for liberation). Taipei, Taiwan: Dawshiang Publishing Co. 1991.

Hwang, Jang Huei. "A Rethinking of Theological Training for the Ministry in the Younger Churches Today." South East Asia Journal of Theology 4:2 (October 1962): 20-32.

Hwang, Maw Ching, ed. Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey tap pyng jing maa yea geh jih niann jiaw huey jeou shyr nian shyy (A ninty year history of the James Laidlaw Maxwell memorial church of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan). Tainan, Taiwan: Maxwell Memorial Church, 1988.

_____ et al., eds. Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey tai pyng jing maa yea geh jih niann jiaw huey yih bae ell shyr nian shyy (A 120 year history of the James Laidlaw Maxwell memorial church of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan). Tainan, Taiwan: Maxwell Memorial Church, 1985.

Hwang, Wuu Dong and Shyu Chian Shinn, eds. Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey lih shyy (History records of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan). vol. 1. Ching Dynasty. Taiwan: The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 1959.

Jan, Jeng Yih. Ba keh lii bor shyh yen tair uan (Dr. Thomas Barclay and Taiwan). Taipei, Taiwan: Evergreen Books, 1976.

Jang, Lih Shwu. "Fuh neu yeu jinn shiou." (Women and education) Neu-shiuan no. 243. (May 1986): 8.

Jeng, Lian Der. "Shyr day fuh neu." (Women in the new age) Neu-shiuan no. 221. (October 1982): 7-14.

Jih, Huey Rong. "You gwo ney fuh yunn tarn neu shing jeau seh." (From national women's movement to discuss women's role) Neu-shiuan no. 255. (May 1988): 15-8.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse. New York: Crossroad, 1993.

Juang, Shwu Jen. "Jiaw huey bii shyh fuh neu ma?" (Does the Christian church despise women?) Neu-shuian no. 292. (July 1994): 4-5.

Jwo, Jih Wen. Ching day tair uan fuh neu de sheng hwo (Taiwanese women's life during the Ching Dynasty). Taipei, Taiwan: Tzyh Lih Woan Baw Publishing Co., 1993.

Knitter, Paul F. No Other Name?: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.

Kwok, Pui-lan. Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992.

Lay, Gau An Syh. Neu shiuan daw huey jean shyy (The short history of women's mission board). Taipei, Taiwan: Women's Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 1965.

Lay, Yeong Shyang. Jiaw huey shyy huah (Topics on Taiwan church history). series I. Tainan, Taiwan: Renguang Publishing Co., 1990.

_____. Jiaw huey shyy huah (Topics on Taiwan church history). series II. Tainan, Taiwan: Renguang Publishing Co., 1990.

Lee, Shirley, ed. The Role of Women. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984.

Leu, Shiow Lian. Leang shing wenn tyi neu shing guan (Women's perspective on the relationship between two sexes). Taipei, Taiwan: Chyan Wey Publishing Co., 1990.

Lin, Bair Lian. "Woo jao daw le." (I have found) Neu-shiuan no. 288 (November 1993): 51-2.

Lin, Jeng Tzy. "Woo yeou woo de tian kong." (I have my own sky) Neu-shiuan no. 288. (November 1993): 54.

Lin, Woan Sheng. "Torng gong torng huoo." (Partnership and stewardship) Neu-shiuan no. 260. (March 1989): 35-7.

Lorde, Audre. Sister Outsider. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.

McFague. Sallie. Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. "Reflections from a Third World Woman's Perspective: Women's Experience and Liberation Theologies." In Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader, ed. Ursula King, 23-43. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994.

_____. Who Will Roll the Stone Away?: The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990.

Plaskow, Judith. Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. New York: University Press of America, 1980.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Ecofeminism: Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination." In Ecofeminism and the Sacred, ed. Carol J. Adams, New York: Continuum, 1993.

Russell, Letty M. The Future of Partnership. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979.

_____. Growth in Partnership. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press,1981.

_____. Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

_____. Household of Freedom. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987.

Sanford, Linda T. and Mary Ellen Donovan. Women and Self-Esteem. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

_____. In Memory of Her. New York: Crossroad, 1983.

_____. Discipleship of Equals. New York: Crossroad, 1993.

_____ and Mary Collins, eds. Women-Invisible in Theology and Church. Edinburg: T & T Clark Ltd., 1985.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Francis. Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church. New York: Crossroad, 1984.

Sheu, Feng Meei. "Fuh neu de jiau seh yeu ding wey." (Women's role and position) Neu-shiuan no. 244. (July 1986): 13-20.

Shiah, Meei Kuan. "Tair uan fuh neu yunn tong jr shern shyue yih yih chu tann." (Primary research on the Taiwanese women's movement and its theological meaning between 1971-1990) Tainan Theological Review 2:1 (December 1994): 87-93.

Shieh, Shwu Yuh. "Shuh suann juu de en dean." (Counting of the Lord's grace) Neu-shiuan no. 240. (November 1985): 8.

Shyu, Chian Shinn. Her lan shyr day tair uan ji du jiaw shyy (A history of the early Dutch mission in Formosa). vol. 1. Taiwan: Presbyterian Church of Formosa Centenary Publications Committee, 1965.

_____ and Jeng Lian Ming, eds. Tair uan ji du jang lao jiaw huey bae nian shyy (A centenary history of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa 1865-1965). 2nd ed. Taiwan: The Presbyterian Church of Formosa, 1984.

Shyu, Jia Jing. "Nii yaw cherng wei maa day hair shyh maa lih yea?" (Whether you want to be Martha or Mary?) Neu-shiuan no. 261. (May 1989): 19-21.

Shyy, Ming. Tair uan ren shy bae nian shyy (Taiwanese history of four hundred years). San Jose, CA: Paradise Culture Associates, 1980.

Spiegel, Marcia Cohn and Deborah Lipton Kremsdorf, eds. Women Speak to God: The Prayers and Poems of Jewish Women. San Diego, CA: Women's Institue for Continuing Education, 1987.

Suen, Shya Fei. "Ie su jiow woo." (Jesus saves me) Neu-shiuan no. 288 (November 1993): 59-60.

Tang, Meng Tsong. "Ren ren chwan daw." (Everyone has to evangelize) Neu-shuian no. 233. (October 1984): 7.

Tarng, Jinn Shiuan. "Tzwo juu men twu." (To be the Lord's disciples) Neu-shiuan no. 232 (August 1984): 1-6.

The Taskforce Report to General Synod 1986 of the Anglican Church of Canada. Violence Aginst Women: Abuse in Society and Church and Proposal for Change. Toronto: Anglican Book Center, 1986.

Tsay, shwu Yu. "Fuh neu shyh gong yan tao huey jean jieh." (Introduction to women's mission) Neu-shiuan no. 258. (November 1988): 10-24.

Tse, Christine. "New Ways of Being Church: A Catholic Perspective." In With Passion and Compassion, eds., Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 89-107. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Tzeng, Huey Hua. "Tsorng harn gwo jiaw huey fuh neu shiunn liann kann tair uan fuh neu yeu jinn shiou." (From Korean church women's training to look at Taiwanese women and further study) Neu-shiuan no. 243. (May 1986): 14-8.

Tzng, Shing Tzyy. "Kaw juu der sheng de muu chin." (Mother who achives victory by the Lord) Neu-shiuan no. 243. (May 1986): 44-5.

Vicedom, George. Faith that Moves Mountains: A Study of the Tribal Church in Taiwan. Taipei, Taiwan: The China Post, 1967.

Wang, Yuh Der. Kuu menn de tair uan (The distrssed Taiwan). Books of the Free Age, No. 9. Taipei, Taiwan: Jeng Nan Rong, 1979.

Wood, Frances E. "Take My Yoke Upon You." In A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil & Suffering, ed. Emilie M. Townes, 37-47. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

Yang, Bih Chuan. Jean ming tair uan shyy (A short history of Taiwan). Gaushyong, Taiwan: The First Publishing Co. 1987.

Yang, Shiang Shiang. "Tzuoh geh kuay leh de neu ren." (Be a happy woman) Neu-shiuan no. 242. (March 1986): 42-4.

Yeh, Meei Jyh. "Fuh neu yeu liing dao." (Women and leadership) Neu-shiuan no. 248. (March 1987): 1-3.

Yong, Ting Jin. "New Ways of Being Church: A Protestant Perspective." In We Dare to Dream, ed. Virginia Fabella and Sun Ai Lee Park, 44-51. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990.

7055-16

EDS/WESTON JESUIT LIBRARY
3 0135 00273 6658